IDENTITY

A study of representation with reference to District Six

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Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Dedicated to
PETER CLARKE
Printmaker, painter and poet
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For the research and preparation of this paper and exhibit, I depended on the assistance, guidance and hospitality of many people.

To:

the communities of the Cape Flats: especially my friends, family, the ex-neighbours and people of Bonteheuwel. I sincerely thank you! This huge task would not have been possible if it was not for your cooperation.

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Preface

Racism is a phenomenon of inferiority. Our blackness is a phenomenon of pride. We are not out to hate Whites. We are out to treat them simply as people. The point, however, is that we can no longer care whether or not Whites understand us. What we do care about is understanding ourselves and, in the course of this task, helping the Whites to understand themselves. Now we are rejecting the idea – their idea which unfortunately has also become deeply embedded in the souls of many of us – the idea that we live by their grace. We may live by the grace of God, but we do not live by the grace of the Whites. (Small, 1971)

In the writing of South African history the foreigner has had sovereignty. To colonise has meant taking ownership not only of land, but also of the body and soul of those who live there. The identities of those who inhabited these lands of Southern Africa have their roots in this phenomenon. The identity of the Cape coloured\(^1\) has a history of more than three hundred and fifty years, generated and moulded by colonialism and racism.

Because of this pathway I had little or no space and time to gaze at myself. I was either gazed at by those who reign, or I gazed at those who were dispossessed. Emerging from the onslaught of racial oppression, I strove to identify myself through oral biographies and autobiographies, in the hope that these might lead to a definition of the cultural activities and values within my indigenous and foreign lineage. By this I mean that I, as a non-white/non-black person, need to understand and interpret myself according to my cultural values. Miscegenation and hybridisation form part of my narrative, but my colouredness is a cultural phenomenon.

A part of my identity has been defined and redefined through racial classifications and categorisations. When I sought myself I discovered myself in the formulation

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\(^1\) Contrary to international usage, in South Africa the term ‘coloured’ does not refer to black people in general (Saunders, 1994: 77). This was a historical classification term for a person in the Western Cape region who was of ‘mixed descent’. The term will be used to indicate the historical classification and segregation laws. This will be expanded on in the following chapter.
of racial boundaries and ethnicity. My coloured and cultural heritage was 'loaded on to the lorry' during the forced removals, to take along to territories unknown. I am often known as gam, skollie or malawi², slang names for a Cape coloured person, also often stereotypes for lieg, brag en steel (lie, brag and steal).

But our new country allows me a new space: I am stepping out of the persona of the created stereotype to question this given identity, and to trace my history in a different way. Through this research, I hope to contribute to a redefinition of coloured identity, and to begin to express this history in a different narrative that can show the violence committed by racial classification and stereotyping.

My interest in this area of study and the importance of this investigation have autobiographical significance. My childhood days, in my birthplace District Six, were short: most of my teenage years were spent in a township³ that became my home for twenty-one years. I have had the privilege to experience life in a cosmopolitan and multiracial city, life in a racially segregated township, and now life in the country's new democracy.

I was born at 19 St Phillips Street in the sixth municipal ward of the city of Cape Town - District Six⁴. In the early 1960s I attended the St Phillips Primary School, situated on the Woodstock side of the Eastern Boulevard and on the corner of Chapel and St Phillip Streets. The building survived the bulldozing of apartheid⁵.

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² European colonists inaccurately used the Bible to justify their subjugation of dark-skinned people by using the Biblical myth (Genesis 9 & Joshua 9) of Noah's dark-skinned descendents, such as Ham (also pronounced as gam), being branded as the bad seed or scum (Stone, 1970 / Wicomb, 1998: 100). As early as 1521 a German Hebrew scholar, Johan Boemus, argued that all barbarous people were descendents of Ham. This theory was a commonplace on both the European and African continents, while in South Africa this ideology became a reality (Fredrickson, 1981: 10). Many of the Cape coloureds are unaware of this and still use the term. The coloureds of the Cape Flats are often stereotyped as skollies (gangsters). Black people (from the Xhosa culture) refer to Cape coloureds as malawu, meaning 'misbehaved' people.

³ The term 'township' is used to make reference to being different. Definition of 'township' - (in South Africa) a planned urban settlement of Black Africans or Coloureds (The Collins Paperback English Dictionary, 1986: 917).

⁴ In 1867, the area situated next to the Castle of Good Hope and known to many as Kanaladorp was demarcated as the sixth municipal district of the city of Cape Town in South Africa. Since then it became known as District Six. Its history will be discussed in a separate chapter.

⁵ Apartheid was a system of racial segregation followed by the National Party after it came into power in South Africa in 1948. It literally means 'separateness; distinctness; racial segregation at all levels' (Oakes, 1988: 486).
clearance and until recently housed a community arts organisation, Community Arts Project (now known as Arts and Media Access Centre).

My family was forcibly removed to the township of Bonteheuwel in the early 1960s, when I was about seven years old. This event took place due to the National Party government's racial segregation policy, implemented in the mid-1950s. Bonteheuwel was one of the many townships born on the Cape Flats to house the displaced coloured residents of the Cape Town region.

My childhood memories of District Six are mainly vague, though tantalising, while some are more vivid. However, a lasting legacy has been left to me: objects and artefacts that survived and the stories remembered by relatives and friends at home. These mementoes and memories of displacement have provided me with much information for my work as I confront the socio-political issues of the place (Sauls, 2001: 16). I undertake this research as a personal journey adding my voice to those of other cultural producers and scholars who, in various disciplines, have richly contributed to the discourse on identity.

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6 Bonteheuwel was one of the many townships developed on the Cape Flats since the 1950s by the apartheid regime, for the displacement of the coloured victims of forced removals. Many coloureds from the city, Sea Point and other areas that were declared white residential zones, were evicted to Bonteheuwel.

7 Oral history also informs us that the apartheid regime used the construction of the national freeway to the city, the Eastern Boulevard as a scheme to remove the residents before the area was declared white.

8 This residential area is situated between the two oceans, from Table Bay across to the False Bay side of the Cape Peninsula. The city's population growth and escalating housing problems caused people to look at the Cape Flats as part of the answer. This was especially so once the Group Areas Act had been implemented and it became one of the biggest resettlement schemes for the evicted coloureds, blacks and Indians. Since the 1950s townships like Bonteheuwel, Langa, Rylands, Manenberg and Nyanga were developed.
Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This dissertation is neither a strictly historical study nor an anthropological analysis of coloured culture and identity, but a series of investigations and researches that problematise representations of 'colouredness' and of District Six. My aim has been to examine and clarify for myself the different contexts of that representation as I engage with actual memories and experiences of coloured culture and District Six while making a series of works. The project refers to oral biography and autobiography, individual and collective commentary, public and family documentary, academic research and other relevant references. While this is a broad discourse, where many issues are left out or barely touched on, I am addressing the matter not to conclude the debate, but to unfold aspects that are significant to my art and to my personal experience.

I have chosen District Six because of its personal historical relevance, and because it provides examples of how identity becomes stereotyped through selective memory and biased representation. Due to social circumstances caused by apartheid in South Africa and the historical and current lack of access to education and resources, the non-coloured or ‘outsider’ has often been, and still often is, in a position to represent coloured history and thus actively determine what is publicly perceived about the cultural identity of the group known as Cape coloureds.

Opportunities to elaborate on historically limited perspectives are greater since the coming of democracy in 1994. Many South African scholars (especially from the historically disenfranchised groups) have now been exposed to fields in which they can explore and research the issues, and thus contribute freely to the discourse of memory and identity. However, even in academic contexts, general

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For this paper I have chosen to use the terms 'coloured', 'black' and 'white' to express the racial diversities in relationship to the topic discussed. I am aware of the various discourses of the coloured culture, such as (1) the uniting of black, white and coloured people in the struggle against human injustice, like the establishment of the UDF (United Democratic Front), embracing the term black as the signifier for the suffering of all people under white domination; (2) members of the coloured group's establishment/affiliation to the KWB (Kleurling Weerstand Beweging); (3) the mistrust of the Cape coloureds towards black empowerment. The term coloured is often used as a historical reference, while black is used for political explanations.

The term 'outsider' refers to those who had no affiliation to or experience of coloured culture within a South African context.
perceptions have not always shifted significantly. Odendaal for instance has emphasised that ‘... post-modern scholars in South Africa also need to problematise their own approaches, social origins, power locations and agendas’ (1996: 15). For example, archives, such as museums and centres for cultural studies, still include, without critical commentary, stereotypical literature and photographic representations of coloured culture and identity. This is despite what coloured scholars and cultural producers, such as Adam Small, Alex La Guma, Neville Alexander, Yvette Abrahams, Richard van der Ross, Crain Soudien, Zimitri Erasmus, Peter Clarke, Lionel Davis, James Matthews, Jakes Gerwel and many others, have contributed towards our understanding of coloured experience and the critique of representations of coloured culture.

An example of an ongoing stereotyping is where a ‘benevolent’ perspective presents coloured and black people as the victims of forced removals under apartheid in such a way that it evokes simplified emotional responses. Trish Gibbon has challenged this tendency in a paper, Fictional Representation of Black Township Life, in which she outlines how ideological considerations have determined how the experiences of the predominantly working class black townships have been presented, chosen and given priority (Gibbon, 1985: 4). In this dissertation I am concerned with how this kind of stereotyping of coloured experience may block how coloureds themselves seek to articulate their own experiences and struggles with identity. I am seeking ways that I as a coloured person with a particular experience in this country and this city, can articulate in my art my researches into the complex and contradictory ways that coloured identity has been represented and misrepresented.

As background to my investigations of the representation of coloured identity, I present a brief historiography of relegation, classification and segregation in the first section of Chapter 2, section (a): The coloured people in South Africa [with particular reference to the Western Cape]. The discussion focuses on the sociopolitical identification of the coloured body in the light of racial constraints which diverse cultures have had to deal with from colonial times all the way to the present post-apartheid society. In the second section of Chapter 2, section (b): District Six: A historical background, I describe the history of District Six, with reference to various researchers, historians and local ex-residents of the place. The
importance of this suburb’s relationship to the city, its once vibrant multicultural community activities and the forced removals are highlighted.

The final section of Chapter 2, section (c): Some observations with regard to the representation of coloured identity in South Africa is a critical examination of the collection, manipulation and dissemination of resources and knowledge accumulated by both ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’. I pay attention to the role of individual authors, producers and directors who, via different media, claim to ‘speak on behalf of’ both the marginalized non-white people of the Cape Flats and those coloureds who contributed significantly towards a discourse of coloured experience.

Lastly, the chapter Practical work: WIE IS MAG= GAM IS WIE explores my own interpretation and apprehension of the definition of coloured experience and identity within my work. I give an explanation of the theoretical and practical aspects of the tableaux and video pieces and how these relate to memory and experience.

This dissertation therefore unfolds and examines a series of contexts that have shaped coloured experience and its representations, as well as my own identity as a coloured. I am coloured but I am not defined by apartheid classifications or by ongoing stereotypes. I want to contribute to expressing coloured experience as something not limited to simple political narratives because I believe that unless different groups critically examine their own histories, South Africans will not develop a true national voice. This research and the art works it supports are two sides of my attempt to work with my own experience and that of communities I have been part of.

\[11\] Due to social circumstances in South Africa marginalized groups are often ‘voiceless’ and history has been and still is too often represented by those with privileged access to education and resources.
Chapter 2: COLOURED IDENTITY

(a) The coloured people in South Africa [with particular reference to the Western Cape]

Edward Said once commented:

The construction of identity involves establishing opposites and ‘others’ whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and interpretation of their differences from ‘us’. (1995: 332)

The historical explanation of the term coloured has been shaped mainly through a discourse of ‘miscegenation’. 

‘Race mixtures’ between indigenous groups and foreign slaves are often described as the most important type of ‘miscegenation’ in the construction of the coloured body by historians such as Professor J S Marais and A N Boyce. The other forms were the European-indigenous and the European-slave interrelationships. The representation of the coloured body, described and analysed as being of ‘mixed heritage’ is significant within the politics of race and segregation. For example, under apartheid the interpretation of ‘mixed identities’ by white authors in particular is usually presented in a vague historiography of the diverse cultures in the country.

This presentation of miscegenation as the source of coloured identity and experience was important in the early 20th century. J M Coetzee’s White Writing examines Sarah Gertrude Millin’s novels such as God’s Step-Children (1926), which described differences between cultures through the word ‘blood’. In Millin’s work ‘Blood distinguishes African from European, Englishman from Afrikaner, Hottentot from Xhosa, Gentile from Jew’ (Coetzee, 1988: 138). In the novel Millin traces family history through the means and concerns of inter-breeding and in her 1951 reissue she wrote ‘Those...who must always suffer, are the mixed breeds of South Africa (Coetzee, 1988: 140).

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12 Erasmus states that ‘There is no such thing as the Black “race”. Blackness, whiteness and colouredness exist, but they are cultural, historical and political identities. To talk about “race mixture”, “miscegenation”, “inter-racial” sex and “mixed descendent” is to use terms and habits of thought inherited from the very “race science” that was to justify oppression, brutality and the marginalisation of “bastard peoples” ’ (2001). For this reason quotation marks will be used for these terms.

13 Refer to Europe and South Africa, A History for South African High Schools (Boyce: 1971). Also refer to Venter (1974). Literature of the ‘other’ was frequently produced for the dominant white group.
My main point is that in this kind of history and theory the identity of coloureds essentially is in their genes and not in their experience and their own understanding of themselves. Adhikari’s thesis *Hope, Fear, Shame, Frustration: Continuity and Change in the Expression of Coloured Identity in White Supremacist South Africa 1910-1994* addresses this as follows:

J S Marais in the 1930s confirmed that ‘This philosophy of blood and race...leads to a passionate aversion to miscegenation...which is the primary article of faith of the South African nation’, while in 1985 Maria van Niekerk, a conservative white woman who expressed her horror at the repeal of the Mixed Marriages Act claimed that she ‘did not stand for bastardising our land’ and she wanted South Africa to be ‘pure white, pure Indian, pure blacks [sic] and the coloureds must be proud of what they are now’. (Adhikari, 2002: 49)

He points out that:

They largely ignore crucial questions relating to the nature of Coloured identity and the way in which it operates as a social identity. By either taking Coloured identity for granted - as something inherent that needs no explanation because it is the automatic product of miscegenation - or by portraying it as a false identity imposed upon weak and vulnerable people by the ruling white minority, the existing literature minimizes the role that Coloured people play in the making of their own identity and presents an oversimplified image of the phenomenon. (Adhikari, 2002: 5)

During the colonial period, the discourse of race and racial practices relied on scientific theories from European cultures. Coetzee quotes Eugen Fisher’s racial description and classification as follows:

...the most important characters are: the colour of the eyes and the hair; the colour of the skin; the Mongolian spot [at the base of the spine]; the growth of the hair; the shape of the nose; the folds of the eyelids; the shape of the lips and other physiognomical details; serological distinction; stature; the shape of the cranium; the shape of the face. (Coetzee, 1988: 157)

With this kind of ‘scientific’ formulation Europeans created both fixed ‘race’ categories and a language of hybridisation, which also fixed an identity for those who came from the mixing of ‘races’. Interpreting Cape coloureds as an indigenous and ‘mixed descendent’ group served the development of the segregation of whites, blacks and coloureds during colonialism. Though the historiography of the city refers to the early twentieth-century classification of

14 Despite class, regional and language differences, descendants from Europe are referred to as whites.
coloured people as a separate group, more recent literature also indicates the earlier existence of ‘race’ separation.

Writers such as Goldin (1987) and Adhikari (2002) have pointed out that government laws, censuses (1904-1936) and acts (1908-1930), such as the Townships, Wage and Juvenile Affairs Acts, classified a coloured person as ‘any Native or Asiatic or any other person who is manifestly a Coloured person’. Hendricks’s analysis of the classifications laws in the early 20th century states that coloured segregation could only have developed if the separation of races and the importance of race purity had been previously articulated (Hendricks, 2001: 30).

Finding their official identity falling between black and white, between aborigine and foreigner, coloureds have always been political pawns in the discourse of race and identity. Coloureds themselves have responded in different ways to this situation, but what I am concerned with here is the fact that the identity of coloureds is somehow presumed to lie in the fact of their ‘mixed origins’, which is then negatively valued.

Adhikari encapsulates such prejudices against coloureds as being without their own truth in a joke commonly heard during the 1960s. ‘God made the white man, God made the black man, God made the Indian, the Chinese and the Jew – but Jan van Riebeeck, he made the Coloured man’ (2002: 44).

Presently, in our post-apartheid era, the term ‘coloured’ is the most contested ‘racial label’. Some of the issues around this were provided by Anthony Wilson’s15 recent remark at the Klein Karoo National Arts Festival 2003, which caused a stir that sparked off a dialogue in the newspapers:

‘I’m not saying that coloured people were better off under apartheid. But are coloured people being marginalized? Yes. We [coloureds] are being victimised. We are being turned into the new slaves of our country, and only because we look different. But we are not considered black we are only half black. When we apply for jobs, we apply for jobs as coloureds’. (Williams, 2003: 3)

Rhoda Kadalie, a human rights activist, stated that:

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15 Anthony Wilson is a veteran coloured South African actor, who was born in Marabastad, Pretoria, from where many families were forcibly removed during apartheid.
Coloured people were never considered to be citizens in their own right, but always an appendage of either one group or another. They are not considered to be part of the rainbow nation. (Williams, 2003: 3)

Radio talk show host, Nigel Pierce, commented as follows:

I can’t understand how people can identify themselves as ‘coloured’. Is it the texture of their hair? The colour of their eyes? Whether or not they have a flat nose? The colour of their skin? We live in a cosmopolitan society and coloured people are symbolic and representative of that society. We’re not ‘coloured’! (Williams, 2003: 3)

In these comments can be seen some of the different sides of the issue: a claim to a definite experience as coloureds and the rejection of a label that implies stereotypes of who coloureds are supposed to be. There is the ongoing experience both of being rejected by others and of rejecting the labelling which implies a negative view. Perhaps since the creation of their ‘race’, the coloured people have experienced contradictions of race and identity.

In the following pages I narrate some of the political background that has shaped this ‘in between’ situation of coloured people, towards a better understanding of what is at stake in coming to terms with the term coloured, which is on the one hand a negative label and racial stereotype, and on the other signifies the culture of a group that has experienced its own world and development, albeit alongside and intermingled with the other groups and communities making up Cape Town and South Africa.

In the wider political realm, resources such as Adhikari’s thesis (Adhikari, 2002), La Guma’s 1972 article *Apartheid and the Coloured People of South Africa,* oral history, as well as my own experience have provided me with insights into the struggles of this culture to find a place. Coloureds have been part of government affairs, albeit in a limited way, since the early colonial era. During the later period of British rule, under which for example the emancipation of slaves took place, coloured people in the Cape came to support an attitude of liberalism which seemed to encourage racial tolerance. Now, with the benefit of hindsight, it seems they were gullible. British policies resulted in little recognition for coloured people and also very little economic and political gain for them. Ultimately the coloured...
people were misused by supposedly sympathetic politicians like Hertzog, who informed Parliament in 1929 of the relative importance of the coloured vote. Hertzog removed the African\(^{17}\) people from the common voters roll and withdrew their enfranchisement rights, while allowing the coloureds to enjoy the freedom of political rights. In this way he meant to ensure that all power remained in the hands of the white politicians while dividing the potential African and coloured opposition.

If white politicians misused the ideology of a cultural affinity between whites and coloureds in order to gain coloured support, the basis of this is partly that many coloureds even today still consider themselves, as they did under apartheid, as being closer to European culture\(^{18}\) than to either indigenous or slave culture. Oral testimonies by coloured people may reveal prejudices towards indigenous groups, such as negative stereotyping of the physical body of Africans, their supposed lack of education and poor living conditions. The coloureds' concern with their own image as being equivalent to that of Europeans in terms of physical appearance, language and social conditions, is illustrated in various media.

Over the past hundred years politicians, from Dr Abdurahman to members of the Coloured Persons Representative Council (CRC)\(^{19}\), such as Sonny Leon and T R Swartz clung to the 'white policies' of the country, supporting a system of racial power, which seemed to give coloureds an advantage over blacks. During our historic election of 1994 the coloured laymen voted for the New National Party, the successor party to the one that created and managed apartheid.

The long tradition of previous legislations of allowing persons to 'pass' from one group to a more privileged one was still common during the apartheid era, thus the coloured body with pigmentation closer to European than to African or Asian heritage could 'pass for white'. Many from the indigenous groups, such as the

\(^{17}\) The term means a native or descendant of Africa. In this discussion it will be used in a South African political context, where it refers to a black person speaking an indigenous or 'Bantu' language.

\(^{18}\) Being partly descended from European settlers, coloureds are popularly regarded as being of 'mixed race' and thus hold intermediate status in the South African racial hierarchy (Saunders, 1994: 78).

\(^{19}\) In 1968 the CRC was created by the apartheid regime. Its members could literally 'draft legislation subject to government approval on matters of finance, local government, education and community development affecting coloured people' (Oakes, 1988: 487).
African and San also likewise filtered into the coloured group to gain greater enfranchisement and more rights.

The Population Registration Act of 1950 made no provision for the San, grouping them into the ‘coloured’ category. Some were classified Africans, others remained unclassified. In a recent article by researcher Julian Jonker ‘n Onbesonge Aandeel, which appeared in Die Burger, an Afrikaans newspaper, the history of a Jazz musician, known as bra Tem Hawker is narrated. During his teenage years Hawker moved from the Karoo to Cape Town to join the South African Navy. Though he saw himself as a Xhosa person he was classified as a coloured person. Hawker was known amongst the musicians in District Six and participated in the traditional musical festivals. During the segregation of black and coloured citizens he insisted that his coloured wife be reclassified as a black citizen (Jonker, 2004: 15).

Even though the Cape coloureds, economically and culturally, generally represented a ‘lower’ level of European culture, they often enjoyed better employment, living conditions, education, social and political freedom than Africans, especially in the Western Cape. The majority of coloured people embraced these privileges, even if they also rejected the fact that they were perceived as second-class citizens and inferior to the liberated and empowered whites.

Between 1948 (when the National Party came to power) and the first democratic election in 1994, the ruling National Party transformed the subtle racial policy of the previous governments into a stringently enforced system of racial segregation, which also resulted in the disenfranchisement of the coloured people. From the 1950s onwards the coloured people faced the onslaught of apartheid oppression. Along with their counterparts, the black population and the Indian group, the coloureds experienced racial laws that entrenched and enforced injustices. The Population Act, No 30 of 1950 abolished previous legislations that permitted ‘passing’ into other groups. The objective of this Act was to establish and enforce a system of race classification based on appearance, general acceptance and repute. The method used was via population registration and the allocation of identity documents. Even so, many coloured people who applied to be reclassified into a different group seldom had practical problems, while a few experienced the
humiliation of 'scientific' and oral investigation. The Mixed Marriages Act, No 55 of 1949 prohibited legal marriages, and the Immorality Act, No 23 of 1957, sexual intercourse, between whites and non-whites.20

During the enforcement of the Group Areas Acts, No 77 of 1957, coloureds experienced forced evictions, similar to those enforced against Africans since the early 20th century, and they were moved away from the central city and its suburbs. They were forced to move to places in the Cape Flats with small houses, unhealthy living conditions and escalating crime. The Act ensured that people settled into their geographically confined designated groups. The majority affected by this were coloureds, blacks and Indians, although some whites also had to vacate their living quarters. From the late 1950s some non-white and multicultural suburbs and living quarters in the Western Cape were destroyed, while better off areas were vacated by means of forced removals and upgraded for the whites.

A large section of District Six, from which 40 000 to 60 000 people were evicted, however remained a barren wasteland until recently, and is at present being restored to reinstate 4 000 ex-residents. In the 1980s part of the land had been used to build a teaching institution, the Cape Technicon, for the white citizens of Cape Town. The remaining apartment blocks, closer to the city and on the outskirts of the district, were renovated to house white Government employees such as policemen and nurses. A small section on the southern side of the Eastern Boulevard survived the apartheid onslaught, and a few homes and institutions like the St Phillips Church, the Marion Institute and the Chapel Street School are still

20 The term non-white will be used to encompass all those who were historically classified during the colonial and apartheid periods as other than European or white; for example a 1936 Union of South Africa census form gave prominence to race distinctions that were tabulated as Europeans, Natives, Asiatic and Coloured Persons. The latter embracing all persons of mixed race, and the census classification includes, amongst others, Hottentots, Bushmen, Cape Malays, Griquas, Korannas, Negroes, St. Helenians, and the Cape Coloured. The document emphasized under the heading Nationality that the majority of the persons in South Africa were British subjects, either by parentage, birth, naturalization, etc. A brief summary of the Union Nationality Act, 1927 indicated who could describe themselves as 'South Africans':

(i) A person born in any part of the Union.
(ii) A British subject who has resided in the Union continuously for not less than two years.
(iii) A naturalized British subject domiciled in the Union, who has resided for a period of not less than three years continuously.
(iv) Wives and children of Union Nationals.
functioning. Protest groups, such as the Hands Off District Six Campaign, which comprised ex-residents and scholars, protested against the redevelopment of the district, which effectively resulted in the remaining land staying vacant.

In addition to legislation concerning living areas, apartheid created other forms of segregation that discriminated against those who were historically classified as ‘non-white’ citizens. The Separate Amenities Act, No 49 of 1953, contained a clause that created and enforced separate facilities for whites and non-whites. This Act, also labelled in literature and by oral history as ‘petty’, ‘bench’ or ‘lift’, allowed the Government to exclude non-whites from enjoying the same facilities as whites, such as public places, businesses and premises, benches and seats, and public transport. The coloured people who enjoyed the ‘freedom’ of the city felt marginalized, yet most accepted their secondary status to continue having better job opportunities, education and living conditions than blacks. The Industrial Conciliation Act, No 28 of 1958, provided employment rights to specific racial groups. This law enfranchised the white population, but also protected the coloureds from black competitors who were in a position to apply for superior positions. For those in the coloured community who embraced their African, and not only their European and Asian heritage, this represented an injustice to all humanity.

The National Party leader, Dr Verwoerd, orchestrated the forced removals of the coloureds and Indians, while creating homelands for blacks. The authorities saw black citizens as forming part of the labour forces, and not as permanent residents of the city. The city itself was meant for the whites, whereas coloureds were offered a future on the outskirts of the city, where they could maintain their own political structures. A number of other laws, such as the segregated State education, had a profound and far reaching affect on the daily lives of the

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21 As distinct from the ‘grand apartheid’ of the Bantustans ‘petty apartheid’ was used to keep the races segregated and protect white privilege in a common area. This Act was officially repealed in 1991 (Saunders, 1994: 191). Also refer to Venter (1974: 8).

22 Hendrik Verwoerd, also known as the ‘architect of Apartheid’, was a psychologist who became the Prime minister of South Africa from 1958 to 1966. He was the Minister of Native Affairs in Malan’s cabinet and from 1950 was responsible for much key apartheid legislation. In 1966 he was stabbed to death in the House of Assembly (Saunders, 1994: 251).

23 The Eiselen Commission (1951) paved the way for the National Party’s policy of complete apartheid in schooling giving rise to separate white, Bantu, coloured and Indian education. This was orchestrated to educate more children than before within their own culture and to prepare them to occupy a separate unequal and inferior place in society (Saunders, 1994: 109).
coloured people. Their arts and culture did not receive the same privileges or attention as that of the whites. Their scholars were seldom recognised as competitors in the various fields of study, and talented youths engaged in cultural activities were rarely given opportunities to compete. There were some exceptions to this, such as being allowed to apply for a permit to participate in events if racially prohibited persons were invited. The tertiary education system for non-whites was affected by the various discriminatory laws, and the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and later the Peninsula Technicon (Pentech), the so-called ‘bush’ colleges, were built to serve mainly coloured scholars.

Organisations like the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan African Congress (PAC) which attracted many coloured supporters eventually used violent resistance. However, by the early 1960s political parties that opposed apartheid were banned and silenced, and many of their leaders were killed, imprisoned or banished. From the 1960s to the mid 1970s coloured people experienced the oppression of apartheid laws, and many talented coloured sports personalities, entertainers and politicians went into exile, as well as a large number of coloureds simply seeking to live an ordinary life free of discrimination.

Although their organisations were banned, many people still committed themselves to fighting against apartheid, and some lost their lives because of it. These include Basil February, a coloured youth who had joined the armed resistance, and who was killed by security forces in 1967, and a coloured member of Umkhonto we Sizwe, James April, who was arrested and sentenced in 1971 for smuggling arms into South Africa. Many coloured professionals, like the artist

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24 UWC was established in 1959 by an Act of Parliament as an ethnic college for coloured students. It opened its doors in 1960 at a Primary school in Bellville South. ‘Since then, it has transformed itself from a small apartheid educational institute to an internationally recognised university...’ (www.uwc.ac.za)

The Peninsula Technicon was established in 1962 when there was a steady growth in apprentices in a variety of trades. ‘Classes were conducted in Cape Town until it was relocated to its present campus in Bellville South in 1967. In 1979, the college became the Peninsula Technicon’ (www.pentech.ac.za)

25 In 1961 the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe by the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP) and fraternal organisations was announced by a series of bomb blasts against apartheid structures in Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Durban. It then became known as the military wing of the ANC (www.anc.org.za)
Lionel Davis, were imprisoned together with members of the ANC, PAC and other political affiliates.

However the contradiction in the position of coloureds continued to show itself. As before, many coloured politicians affiliated themselves with the apartheid regime's Coloured Persons Representative Council Amendment Act of 1968. A majority of coloureds in and around Cape Town accepted what they felt was a fairly good life in their new environment and many became accustomed to and tolerant of the effects of apartheid regulations.

In 1976, Soweto, a 'township' in Johannesburg, was the site of a major youth uprising which marked a turn-around in the politics of the country. The coloured youth in the Cape saw this as an opportunity to raise their voice in support of the black students against the apartheid regulations; they protested against 'gutter' education, and especially against the introduction of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in schools. To quote Hjalte Tin in the essay, *Children in Violent Spaces: A Reinterpretation of the 1976 Soweto Uprising* (Tin, 2001), '...the fact remains, that the children, as children, somehow found a weak spot in the rule of apartheid and were able to attack the state so successfully that 1976 became the turning point of Apartheid' (Tin, 2001: 127). Protest gatherings of the Black Consciousness Movement that grew rapidly in 1976 were held in coloured 'townships' such as Athlone. Like the first black victim, Hector Petersen, the first coloured youth, Christopher Truter, was shot and died in September 1976, during such a protest.

26 At present Lionel Davis lives and works as an educational officer/tour guide, on Robben Island. During the apartheid era he was a cultural activist who designed and printed many posters for the Resistance organisations and Trade unions, like UDF and Cosatu protest rallies held in Cape Town.  

27 On 8 January 1912 representatives of people's organisations and religious bodies, graduates, clergymen and chiefs gathered at Mangaung in Bloemfontein and formed the South African Native National Congress. Its aim was to unite all African people to defend their rights and to fight for their freedom. In 1923 the organisation changed its name to African National Congress (Thema, 1953 -www.anc.org.za) In April 1959 some members of the ANC left the organisation to form the Pan African Congress (PAC). Robert Sobukwe was the first elected president of PAC. Their most successful campaign was the fight against the pass laws. The Sharpeville tragedy (where sixty eight people were killed) was the start of a national protest against the pass laws (www.paca.org.za). Also refer to Saunders (1994: 190).  

28 The 'Black' students started protesting against injustices such as apartheid laws, inferior education and their status in South Africa.  

29 A 12 year old scholar, Hector Petersen, was shot in Soweto on 16 June 1976.  

30 A standard 8 (grade 10) scholar, Christopher Truter, born 1960, was shot during the riots in Bonteheuwel in September 1976 and died in hospital of his wounds (Adams, 2004: 6).
In the 1980s the political movement towards reform was strengthening amongst the coloured community and in August 1983 an estimated 15 000 to 20 000 people gathered at Rocklands Civic Centre in Mitchell’s Plain to support the launch of the United Democratic Front (UDF). This organisation, led by, among others, Dr Allan Boesak, united many other anti-apartheid organisations of the Western Cape. Slogans like ‘apartheid divides, the UDF unites’ were carried on banners and shouted by coloured and black citizens, marking a historical moment when the oppressed race groups united in the struggle for humanity by embracing a common identity.

The 1980s also saw an increase of coloured support and solidarity towards the apartheid struggle, with many rejecting the derogatory label ‘coloured’ as a product of colonialism and apartheid. ‘Don’t call me coloured, I’m black’ became a common outburst by politicised members of the coloured community. Parents were seen assisting the youth in street battles. Thornton Road in Belgravia saw one of the fiercest battles between the youth and the security police. During the ‘Trojan horse’ incident or the ‘Battle of Belgravia’, residents witnessed the killing of three coloured youths. During the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings, many people heard the narrative of such coloured commitments to the political warfare of the time; there were also memorial ceremonies to martyrs like Ashley Kriel, and testimonies of political activists like Zahrah Narkadien.

31 Mitchell’s Plain on the Cape Flats is one of the largest coloured ‘townships’ that has housed victims of forced removals since the 1970s.
32 Allan Boesak, a theologian, was the leader of the World Alliance of Reform Churches during the apartheid upheaval. He was born in Kanamas in the north-western Cape, was a student chaplain and lecturer at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and president of the alliance of Black Reformed Christians in South Africa. He was an outspoken opponent of apartheid and saw the Christian gospel in terms of the liberation of the oppressed (Magnusson, 1990: 170).
33 This was a planned battle by the security forces, who hid security force members in crates on a truck, and when the youth attacked it with stones, they opened fire.
34 The TRC was created in terms of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, No 34 of 1995. The task of this commission was to investigate human rights abuses that occurred during 1960-1994, based on oral memories presented to the TRC. They had to consider applications for amnesty and to formulate policy proposals and recommendations on rehabilitation (www.doj.gov.org.za/trc)
35 Ashley Kriel was an ANC activist who was killed by members of the security force during the apartheid era.
36 Zahrah Narkadien was an ANC activist and Umkhonto we Sizwe combatant who was imprisoned and held in solitary confinement during the 1980s (Grunebaum & Robins, 2001: 159).
The 1990s witnessed the establishment of the country’s new democracy, celebrating social and political freedom, giving rise to what Archbishop Desmond Tutu called the ‘rainbow nation’. The definition of coloured, which in the past had included various indigenous communities, was now challenged from different sides. In the following section I outline some of these challenges to the idea of coloured.

Erasmus, in her introduction to *Coloured by History: Shaped by Place* has emphasized that the 1980s Black Consciousness Movement, which, supported by coloured activists, had sought to create a single black identity for the sake of the apartheid struggle, which effectively meant that coloureds would remain ‘blacks of a special type’ (Erasmus, 2001). She quotes a UDF activist as saying that ‘the price that had to be paid to become part of the mainstream resistance [was that] there was no place for ‘Coloureds’ as such, but only for ‘Blacks’’ (2001: 19). Grunebaum & Robins (2001) also refer to the Human Rights Violations testimonies by Zarah Narkadien regarding her identity as a coloured person:

> I think prior to my experience of my black comrades, I was denying this history that was forced on [me] by the South African government, that you are a coloured. And I was trying to shake it off and be this African woman that my parents tried to encourage me to be. But I think when I came out [of prison] I realized that was being too much of a dreamer, too idealistic, that even though I’m achieving this African woman status this coloured woman status may not be in the inside of me but it is on the outside of me. I had to [see] that reality painful as it was. It was like taking a good few steps back or eating your own vomit, that’s how bad I felt it was. But it was reality and I decided to rather embrace and deal with it. I make it my business whenever I talk to black colleagues or black friends, and if they make remarks about coloured people, I correct them immediately [...] {Transcript of Case JB04418, testimony of Narkadien, TRC Special Hearings – Prisons, Johannesburg, 21 July 1997}.

(Grunebaum & Robins, 2001: 160)

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37 After receiving his MA in Theology in Britain, Desmond Tutu was employed by the World Council of Churches, appointed Anglican Dean of Johannesburg, and then Bishop of Lesotho, before becoming General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches. In the 1980s he continuously criticised the apartheid regime and its policies and supported sanctions against it. In 1984 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and later became the first African Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town (Saunders, 1994: 242). After the establishment of democracy in the country, he was appointed chairperson of the TRC.

38 In the 1990s Tutu, during one of his speeches, referred to South Africa’s diverse cultural groups by saying ‘we are the Rainbow people’. Since then many have referred to South Africa as the ‘Rainbow Nation’.
Mervyn Ross of the Kleurling Weerstandsbeweging (KWB) describes the coloureds as direct descendants of the Khoisan, and along with other movements such as the Coloured Forum and the Brown National Front\(^39\) argues for some form of independence for coloured people in post-apartheid South Africa. Though such coloured forums are peripheral in the post-apartheid political arena, they and indeed the majority of coloureds, show hostility towards the present ‘black’ Government. As mentioned earlier, a majority of coloured voters during the country’s national democratic elections in 1994 and 1999 voted for the party of the former apartheid regime - the National Party, now ‘transformed’ into the New National Party to suggest a new deal and with the intention of attracting coloured voters.

It was stereotypically and derogatory said of coloureds *Malawu sal nooit regkom nie. Malawu is twee gevriet.* (Coloureds will never change. Coloureds are two-faced).\(^40\) It was said they were clinging to their European heritage and discarding their indigenous identity. Afrikaners, such as Marieke de Klerk,\(^41\) added to this by referring to them as a ‘left-over’ negative group, a ‘non-people without a history of governing that was always under the wing of the whites and needed supervision’ (Erasmus, 2001: 18).

They voted as a cultural group who were moulded as ‘less than white’; they were not black, but ‘better than black’ (Erasmus, 2001). Their present housing shortages, unemployment and escalating crime are widely perceived to result from the negligence of the ANC Government. In 2000 the Democratic Party (DP)\(^42\) and

\(^39\) ‘The Kleurling Weerstandsbeweging (Coloured Resistance Movement) constructs coloured people as an ethnic group and argues for a self determination of coloured people in the post-apartheid South Africa’. Other movements like the Brown National Front and the Coloured Forum have similar notions of the place of ‘coloured’ in the New South Africa. These movements are presently marginalized in the politics of the Western Cape (Erasmus 2001: 26)

\(^40\) This is another manner in which coloureds are often described in oral history.

\(^41\) Marieke de Klerk was the deceased wife of the deposed State President F W de Klerk.

\(^42\) In 1959 a number of liberal members of the United Party left to form the Progressive Party (PP) in South Africa’s all-white parliament. In the 1970s the party became the official opposition, but in the 1980s as black resistance grew many of its members voted for the National Party which promised white security. In 1989 this became the Democratic Party (Saunders, 1994: 88).
the New National Party (NNP) proceeded to form the Democratic Alliance (DA) and accordingly received many of their votes, as coloureds believed that these white politicians would see to their upliftment and restore their 'proper' position in the new democracy.

Also after 1994, people claiming descent from Bushmen, Nama, Baster and Griqua groups became increasingly involved in asserting their own indigenous (Khoisan) identities and vigorously reclaiming their cultural and political rights. Politician Benny Alexander went to the extreme of publicly disowning his 'slave name' for that of 'Khoisan X' in 1995 (Grumebaum & Robins, 2001: 170).

In opposition to this, other coloured people still view coloured identity as a relationship with a 'Bushmen', 'Gam' or 'slave' mentality, which hinders the transformation process of the nation. In the 1990s scholars, such as Neville Alexander and Norman Duncan, similarly articulated coloured identity as a white-imposed, racist and reactionary label that should best be left behind us in the post-apartheid era. Duncan implied that if a coloured identity and coloured culture did indeed exist, it would be 'a new form of racism' (Erasmus & Pieterse, 1997: 5).

Although I follow that these arguments have validity as signposting dangers to the search for a non-racial language for the new nation, at the same time I also believe that the coloured people themselves need to deal with the complexities of this term, and to let their understanding grow within a 'healing' process towards a discourse of a national identity. During the colonial and apartheid eras with their

43 The National Party was formed in 1914 under the leadership of Hertzog to represent Afrikaner interests. In 1934 it fused with the South African Party (SAP) to form the United Party (UP). It later became the Herstigte National Party and after it came into power in 1948, was renamed the NP. After the democratic elections in 1994 it became known as the New National Party (NNP) (Oakes, 1988: 490).
44 Benny Alexander was a former member of the Pan African Congress and a Member of Parliament in the 1990s.
45 During the 1960s Neville Alexander, an educationalist and political activist who led a group known as the Yi Chi Chin Club, which emerged from the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM), was imprisoned on Robben Island for 10 years for conspiracy to commit sabotage. The NEUM, which was established in 1943, divided into two sections in the 1950s. The movement in the Western Cape became known as Unity Movement, which attracted members of organizations such as the Cape African Teachers Association and the Cape Coloured Teachers League of South Africa. The movement strongly rejected the Nationalist party's racial categories especially the label coloured. Also refer to Baruch Hirson's A Short History of the Non-European Unity Movement - An Insider's View (www.revolutionary-history.co.uk)
social and political upheavals, coloureds as a group never experienced themselves as having a critical voice and meaningful for their history.

Discourses of national identity are in danger of either romanticising or stereotyping coloured culture in an inappropriate, illusory or benevolent way. The dialectical interrelationship of cultural events, inside and outside of memory, need to be reviewed to shape the question of coloured culture.

In order to discuss aspects of the representation of coloured culture, I will now present a brief history of District Six as part of the City of Cape Town as background to showing what has been left out and what included in representations of this now world famous site.
(b) District Six: A historical background

The stories of the brutal assault of the laws of social segregation on thriving communities and their urban fabrics are still being told and the truths of apartheid are continuously being revealed. Given these emerging narratives, I would like to emphasise that the history of the city of Cape Town, especially the chapter of District Six, has yet to find its appropriate meaning within national history.

Since the arrival of the settlers during the 17th century a relationship has been unfolding between the indigenous people and the foreigners. During its growth into a modern city, Cape Town attracted and imported a diversity of people and cultures. Many of these merged, eventually forming the heart and soul of District Six which has been moulded by the heritage of its cosmopolitanism. This was reflected in its buildings, such as the Dutch, German and Victorian-style homes and Gothic design churches, which provided a physical journal of the history of its people.

Many authors have recorded the history of District Six from various perspectives. Its story is now a familiar theme even amongst those who never knew the place once known as Kanaladorp\(^\text{46}\) and later as District Six. Settlement originally started on the lower slopes of Devil's Peak more than three hundred and fifty years ago, when the area became a home for the fortune seekers, refugees and later rural migrants and freed slaves from various cultural origins. District Six was a community of working class people, comprising numerous ethnic groups, both indigenous and foreign by birth, in an integrated and vibrant community.

The sixth district of the Cape metropolis became a home to many of these citizens, who were recorded by the European as 'other' and classified as Cape coloured. And yet it was not only a coloured district. Historical records and oral testimonies (mainly from coloured communities from the Cape Flats) indicate that the first

\(^{46}\) The name either derives from the Malay word \textit{kanala}, meaning 'please' or 'helping one another' or alternatively from a canal or ditch (called the Capel Stoot) that ran from the gardens to the Castle along the side of the district (Bickford-Smith, 1990: 36). The first meaning is the more popular one amongst the coloured ex-residents of District Six.
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inhabitants of District Six came from various cultural origins, such as indigenous, European and Asian who then developed a deep sense of place and belonging.

This site was most probably first inhabited long before Europeans invaded the southern part of Africa. Indigenous tribes of the southern African coast, pastoralists or hunter-gatherers, might have established grazing fields or hunting grounds on the shores of Table Bay. Situated next to the oldest building in South Africa, the Castle of Good Hope, the district’s location also suggests that members of the Dutch East India Company could have occupied it as well when they arrived in Cape Town.

Close to the central city, the district attracted a middle-class society, which built beautiful Victorian-style homes in the 19th century. After the emancipation of the slaves in 183447 the district became home to those who had been freed. Many of these slaves came from Indonesia and India; their descendants became skilled artisans and craftsmen who contributed to the evolution of Cape Dutch architectural homes.

Bickford-Smith’s article, _The Origin and Early History of District Six to 1910_, described the city of Cape Town in the 1840s as a small town with a population of 20 000. The site that was known as Kanaladorp, east of the castle, was occupied by only a few buildings. In the 1840s and 1850s the district’s inhabitants represented nearly the whole range of the city’s society. As in the other parts of the city, during the 1840s the wealthy citizens of Cape Town had not yet established a geographical distance between themselves and the less prosperous citizens.

Thus, in the 1840s Kanaladorp inhabitants ranged from the likes of a Maximillian Thalwitzer, a leading wool merchant and Consul for the Hanseatic towns, or Benjamin Norden, another merchant and founder of Cape Town’s first Jewish congregation, through artisans, tradesmen, domestic servants and labourers to prostitutes. (Bickford-Smith, 1990: 36)

The amalgamation of different classes did not necessarily mean that the residents were completely tolerant and that there was no class or racial conflict. Thalwitzer

47 The abolition of slavery and the official emancipation of slaves occurred on 1 December 1834. The slaves in the Cape Colony were only freed four years later in 1838, after serving an apprenticeship with their slave masters. (Hendricks, 2001: 40 and www.sahistory.org.za)
warned prophetically that ‘The better part of our inhabitants... will soon have...to abandon their homes, unless the poor could be properly “controlled”.’

Development of the railways and trams in the 1860s and 1870s allowed the affluent residents of Kanaladorp to move to other zones in the city, such as the Gardens, as well as to Green Point, Sea Point and districts in the southern suburbs⁴⁸ (Bickford-Smith, 1990: 36-37).

The area was baptised District Six in 1867 when it was demarcated as the sixth district by the Municipality Board Amendment Act. From the middle to the end of the 19th century, this district, close to the harbour and central city, developed rapidly. It provided affordable accommodation for immigrants from Europe seeking jobs and business opportunities. Shops were established between the houses and along Hanover Street, while small factories developed in Sir Lowry Road. The escalating workload at the harbour, which was after all a refreshment and refuelling station on the trade route between the east and the west, attracted indigenous inhabitants from as far as the Eastern Cape. Over time the economic growth of the city drew increasing numbers of people to Cape Town, from the rural outskirts of the city and from mission stations such as Genadendal, Grabouw, Elim and Pniel. These processes led to a situation where many coloured and black citizens lived in the city itself, the majority in District Six.

The district was never described as a European or white suburb, and its cosmopolitan nature was always mentioned. Most of the whites who owned houses and businesses in the district were in fact Jewish. These were some of the last of the white population to leave the district, moving to the well-groomed neighbouring suburbs like Gardens, but retaining ownership of their houses and businesses in District Six. Another group that mingled with this heterogeneous

⁴⁸ Many of these areas, such as Harfield Road, Newslands in the southern suburbs, and Tramway Road in Sea Point, which were ‘mixed areas’ were declared ‘whites only residential suburbs’ when the Group Areas Acts were implemented in the1950s and coloureds had to move to their ‘own’ townships. An ex-resident of District Six, Gregory Arendz, during his interview spoke of how the white residents of the district avoided travelling with the Hanover Street bus. They (the whites) would rather take the Walmer Estate bus and get off at the outskirts and then walk the extra distance just to avoid using the same bus as the skollies or...so that their rich families won't see them taking the same bus as the coloureds' (Sauls, 2000).
community were the St Helenians\textsuperscript{49}, who were classified as either white or coloured. Other immigrants from Europe who established themselves in the district came from Italy, Greece and Portugal. English- and Afrikaans-speaking whites are also often mentioned in oral history as living among the coloureds. Small Asian groups that occupied homes and businesses in the district were the Indians and Chinese\textsuperscript{50}. These groups and the West European group, the Jewish people,\textsuperscript{51} were discriminated against during the city’s early racial development because they were regarded as being inferior to other ‘better’ Europeans. However, whereas the Jewish citizens filtered into this superior group, the Indians and Chinese retained their second-class status. While researching my own family history, I discovered an old photograph album of portraits describing activities in the district, and including a page of photographs of Chinese people. It was explained to me that these were immigrants who had resided in the district during World War Two. After the War, a few of them remained and made District Six their home. So too did other immigrants from other continents establish themselves in the district.

Although whites owned most of the district’s houses and businesses, history proves that the coloureds, from slave or mixed origin, were the numerical majority of residents\textsuperscript{52}. At the beginning of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, there were an estimated 8 000 blacks living alongside coloureds and whites in the Greater Cape Town area, the majority of them in District Six. At that stage the ratio of black and coloured to white residents was 2:1.

\textsuperscript{49} Beatrice Benjamin, who was referred to as the greatest girl singer in the Cape in the \textit{The Golden City Post} (25 January, 1959) spoke of her Cape Coloured identity during research conducted by Carol Muller in 1990s. She states that her family hailed from the remote Atlantic Ocean Island, St Helena, then ruled by the British. On their arrival at the Cape, they settled with other St Helenians in District Six. They were classified Cape Coloured, even though the ‘St Helenians aspired to participation in a milieu of English language middle class cosmopolitanism and “respectability” ’ (Muller, 2002: 6).

\textsuperscript{50} Since the Dutch settlement at the Cape in 1652, the trading relationship between the Dutch and India grew and large numbers of Indians were sold at the Cape as slaves (Reddy, 1995). During the 1900s Chinese indentured workers were imported to South Africa to work on the gold mines in the Transvaal (Saunders, 1994). A few of them who came during the World Wars managed to settle amongst the coloureds in District Six.

\textsuperscript{51} The Jewish community of South Africa are predominantly of Lithuanian origin. Even though a survey in the 1980s indicated that the Jews were generally perceived as part of the privileged white community (Saunders, 1994: 148), other sources do inform of prejudices and anti-Semitism against them from the British and the Afrikaners, which kept them on the edge of white society; they were also referred to by the Afrikaners (before 1901) as the uitlanders [foreigners] (Sand, 2003: 1).

\textsuperscript{52} Even though oral history and literature described the coloured residents as the majority, politicians later disputed this statistic. Also refer to \textit{District Six through the lens of Jansje Wissema} (1986).
As noted, settlers occupied this area situated next to the Castle and central city so that it developed as a middle class area, with residents building modest two-storey terraced dwellings in the Cape Georgian and Victorian styles close to their businesses and shops. History (oral and documented) clearly indicates that Europeans were in fact owners and residents of these homes before the freed slaves leased the dwellings from them. An ex-resident, Mr Ventura, during his interview, said of the district ‘Dit was 'n Joodse plek’. [It was a Jewish place] (Interview with Sauls 2001, Bonteheuwel). During my own application for a land claim, I was required to get legal documentation from the original homeowners. The names and dates Joseph Mulvihal (1924) and Isabell Ann Mulvihal (1953) that appear on the valuation certificate and property record reminded me of my parents’ conversations, when they mentioned of the home’s rental as ‘Die Jood / Joe se rent geld’ [The Jew’s / Joe’s rental]. Alongside other community infrastructures, the district also had eighteen churches, four synagogues and three mosques.

Oral history always described the Jewish community as being part of the district's social activities. Mr Ventura mentioned that his family moved to a part of the district where Jewish communities resided, and emphasised that ‘Golding se skool was eers 'n Joodse skool’ [Golding’s school was once a Jewish school] (Interview with Sauls 2001). Linda Fortune in her memoir, The House in Tyne Street: Childhood Memories of District Six, also conveyed the story of Mr Leonard, the German resident, and his Afrikaner wife from the Albertinia district, who were forced to move to a white residential area in Cape Town. She informs her reader of their reluctance to move away from District Six and its community (Fortune, 1996: 105-111). Reddy in his essay, India in South African History, (Reddy, 1995) examines the contribution of Indian communities to the development of the country’s history. He feels that the history of the indigenous African people was distorted, that the coloured communities were treated with contempt, and that the Indians were regarded as alien intruders. While La Guma describes the role played by Dr Abdurahman, the first coloured member of Cape Town’s Municipal Council
and president of the African Political Organisation, Reddy stresses that he was from Indian ancestry and was helpful to the Indian community\textsuperscript{53}.

The multicultural facts of the place need to be made visible, because what emerges in too many accounts is a condescending account of the multi-ethnic environment of District Six. The European-coloured, African-coloured and Asian-coloured relationships are seldom researched to disclose imageries of the cosmopolitanism and multi-culturalism of the district. For example though many from the black community had been removed to the outskirts of the city, to townships or locations called Ndabeni and Langa\textsuperscript{54} in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century many black people still resided amongst the coloureds, up to when the district was declared 'white' in 1966. And black people in the district and other parts of the city were not only those delivering bread and milk, but included resident visual and performing artists, such as Kippie Moeketsi (saxophonist) and Gerard Sekoto\textsuperscript{55} (visual artist) (Sauls 2001: 19). Sekoto lived in the district in the 1940s. He resided with journalist George Manuel’s mother whose home was opposite the Roeland street prison. His genre paintings, such as \textit{Prison yard} (1944), \textit{Houses} (1945), \textit{District Six: Children Playing} (1945) and many others, are valuable contributions and references to the history of the place’s social welfare. As an outsider to the district his works, such as \textit{Prison yard} (1944) comment on his personal experience of the place.

Another black ex-resident of District Six, Nomvuyo Ngcelwane\textsuperscript{56}, author of \textit{Sala Kahle, District Six – an African Woman’s Perspective}, noted another dimension to

\textsuperscript{53} Refer to La Guma’s \textit{Apartheid and the Coloured People of South Africa} (http://www.anc.org.za/ancdoc/history/misc/laguma12.html) and Reddy’s \textit{India in South African History} (1995).

\textsuperscript{54} In 1901 many of the blacks were forced to move to locations such as Uitvlugt forest station (later renamed Ndabeni). Twenty-five years later the Government allocated Ndabeni as an industrial site and the Ndabeni community were for a second time forced to move to a location three miles away from the city and ‘beyond the white suburbs’, called Langa (Bickford-Smith, 2001: 18).

\textsuperscript{55} Kippie Moeketsi was a great jazz musician in the 1950s to 1980s who performed and recorded with well-known and popular South African musicians like Abdullah Ibrahim, Hugy Masekela and Miriam Makeba (Drum magazines, June 1963: 27; October 1963: 18-23). Gerard Sekoto is widely considered to be the first black painter of importance in the history of South African art (Saunders, 1994: 189). Also refer to Lindop (1995) and Manganyi (1996).

\textsuperscript{56} Nomvuyo Ngcelwane lives in Khayelitsha, Cape Town and works for the Western Cape Education Department.
the history of District Six in a 1996 article, ‘District Six Blacks Urged to Submit Claims’, related to the land claims that appeared in the Cape Argus. The article started as follows: ‘Perceptions that District Six had been inhabited exclusively by Coloured people were inaccurate…’ (Ngcelwane, 1998: 134). An ex-librarian of District Six, who was recently awarded an honorary Masters degree from UCT for being a cultural activist, as well as a myth-maker of the district for the past forty years, Vincent Kolbe, commented as follows:

With all due respect to Richard Rive, Alex La Guma and the other professionals, this book – the first such detailed recreation of Black life in District Six in autobiographical form I’ve come across – exudes an honesty that rekindles the memories of the old District Sixers, and hopefully also strikes a chord in the hearts of readers who never knew the place. (Ngcelwane, 1998)

Wicomb’s article Shame and identity: the case of the coloured in South Africa (1998) also examines the representation of District Six as an ethnic homeland:

Our postmodern suppression of history demands a strategy of relocating and rehistoricizing our own situation lest we come to believe the myth of our collective birth in Cape Town’s District Six in the early 1960s. The making of the subject and the script of shame imbricated in such ethnographic self-fashion as well as in the discursive construction by others need to be examined in the light of the narrative of liberation and its dissemination in the world media that constructed oppression in particular ways. (Wicomb, 1998: 94)

Narratives mention the tolerance that existed in a diverse community that could accommodate a range of religious and political beliefs, which contributed to the sense of community that had existed in the district. Many from the district recall the Cape Town Municipality’s lack of facilities and housing which led to overcrowding, which meant that a once thriving and vibrant district became stereotyped as a slum. This dangerous stereotyping of the place by those ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ its boundaries was co-opted by the racist National Party Government to generate an image of the district as a place of crime, degradation and immorality.

In the city of Cape Town, mixed areas like District Six were demolished and a diverse group of people were segregated and designated to their ‘proper’ racial groups under the Group Areas Act, No 44 of 1950 and No 77 of 1957. These acts of power, identified as political Acts and Amendments, enforced control over the distinct racial groups in South Africa. In 1966, the district was declared a ‘white’
suburb and in the early 1970s, families were forcibly removed and a luxury suburb for whites only was planned for this vacant land. The late 1970s saw the district transformed into the red soil of Devil’s Peak. Zonnebloem, as it became known, marked the death of a ‘home’ for many working class people, both indigenous and foreign by birth. The inhabited landscape was removed from the history of the country. At the same time, the Cape Flats gave birth to coloured, Indian and black ‘townships’ like Guguletu, Bonteheuwel, Manenberg, Lavender Hill, Khayelitsha, Factreton, Heideveld, Kalksteenfontein, Rylands and Nyanga.
Some observations with regards to the representation of coloured identity in South Africa

In the history of the 20th century South Africa is the last country - Yugoslavia is another story - to have used legal racial segregation to split its citizens into different, unequal groups. If all South Africans now bear the stigma of a schizoid paranoia, they do not all live it out in the same way. Like the components of some perverse kaleidoscope, they must now combine to rewrite a history whose roles await redefinition. With the race issue still at the heart of an ongoing political debate, unflinching self-examination is the inescapable order of the day. No one, whatever his personal aspiration, has been able to remain neutral. No one, whatever the role assigned to him by birth, can dissociate himself from the drama this land has lived through. (Njami, 2002: 11)

In discussing the notion of memory, with reference to its role in the perception of cultural identity, one needs to examine the forms of articulation of memory and the kind of understanding it evokes; one must also examine what social ends or needs are addressed in discourses on memory. In this section I shall refer to academic research, literature and its archiving, contemporary art and theatre, to illustrate my argument. I will examine the ways in which perceptions of cultural identity could be influenced by concepts of what I shall term the ‘insider’ and the ‘outsider’ - those who were part of what was represented, and those who were outside of it. I make this particular distinction because of the exceptional effects that the social, educational and geographic structures of apartheid had on different communities, and because of the extreme levels of separation and isolation.

To what extent is a culture selectively interpreted or even entirely misrepresented within its wider context as a result of outsiders having a stronger voice in the public domain? Representations and interpretations of District Six have been largely produced by and consumed within comparatively elitist ‘outsider’ circles, and District Six seems to have become synonymous with colouredness. The ‘common story’ is that District Six was home to a thriving coloured community that became victims of an apartheid ideology. Within our new democracy many ex-residents of the district (especially those of the coloured community) share their memories with historians, sociologists, anthropologists, art curators, journalists, musicians and even tourists. For many ‘insiders’ the story of District Six must be kept alive, but for ‘outsiders’ the thing has a different meaning or function. Rarely,
for example, do the many authors or artists on the outside of events and from their position of privilege comment on segregation as such, or on the forced removals during the apartheid era. Rarely do they discuss how these experiences affected them and what impact this might have had on their own interpretation of these issues.

During the upheaval of the apartheid era many white authors, journalists and artists were criticised by members of the non-white community for attempting to represent or voice the opinions of this ‘other’ (i.e. ‘non-whites’). Richard Rive in District Six: Fact and Fiction states that novels written by white authors about the slum conditions of District Six portrayed the area in a negative light:

They lack the sympathy that comes with intimate knowledge and genuine empathy. They are either superficial or condescending or both. They read exactly like the novels are a commentary by white outsiders desperately writing about blacks from the vantage point of ‘understanding from a safe distance’. (Rive, 1990: 115)

The problem is not so much who may or can represent the coloured story or the coloured body, but what is portrayed and how, how accessible it is and what understanding may be derived from it. The exclusion or absence of different cultural views in any story may cause misunderstanding and conflict as well. The histories of all stake holders (both insiders and outsiders) need to be represented and credited equally to avoid generalisation and selective representation. In this regard Shepherd quoted a ‘young Hegelian’ as saying:

...since the thesis is a white racism there can only be one valid antithesis, i.e. a solid black unity to counter-balance the scale. If South Africa is to be a land where black and white live together in harmony without fear of group exploitation, it is only when these two opposites have inter-played and produced a viable synthesis of ideas and a modus vivendi. (Shepherd, 2001: 6)

Lost Communities, Living Memories, published by the Centre for Popular Memory (Field, 2001), informs the reader of the oral histories and photographic documentation of those who were forced to move from their living quarters in the Cape district. Though there is a brief description of the history of the City’s segregation and apartheid policies, which affected white, coloured, Indian, Asian and black living conditions in very different ways, the emphasis is mainly on coloured residents. Lewis observed that the right to interpret black bodies or
cultures has been a white right (or rather a right claimed or usurped by whites), which has become more questionable within the post-apartheid period. Black people are becoming more conscious of being depicted as the narrators of their emotions and experiences (Lewis, 1996: 100).

The photographic representations in Lost communities, living memories, show interesting imagery of the forced removals within the Western Cape. The ‘truths’ of their living environments, of the social and cultural activities of both black and coloured people, such as for example, the klopse parades, shebeens and the street life, are accurately and benevolently presented, while whites are portrayed as ‘respectable’ officials and university scholars assisting the poor. Although I do believe that these images of whites are indeed a true part of the history, it might be more informative and accurate to ‘re-image’ the history of forced removals by also portraying the lives of the historically enfranchised people of the city as well.

For instance authors such as Denis-Constant Martin and Charmaine McEachern produced studies that repeat only a part of a ‘living’ history of the city. Martin, in a sub-section entitled The Coloureds in South African Culture, which forms part of an essay called What’s in the Name Coloured conveniently interpreted coloured culture only as the ‘coon’ identity, which he had researched for a previous book Coon Carnival (Martin, 1999). A single paragraph informs the reader of some coloured scholars’ contributions to the field of literature. Was the ‘coon’ carnival the essence of coloured culture? The research on coloured identity in a national context would need to be much more than merely contributing a chapter on the history of the ‘coon’. The research done by Martin on the klopse is a vital part of the coloured history, but needs to be properly contextualised within a wider knowledge of coloured and South African culture.

McEachern in her article Mapping the Memories: Politics, Place and Identity in the District Six Museum, Cape Town, takes the reader through a journey across the map on the floor of the District Six Museum narrates and retells the experiences

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57 On the 10th December 1994 the District Six Museum, which is housed in the Central Methodist Mission’s old church at 25A Buitenkant Street Cape Town, was officially opened. The museum was the culmination of years of planning on the part of the District Six Museum Foundation, which had emerged between the 1970s and 1990s to preserve the memory of District Six. The museum itself will be discussed later in the chapter.
of the ex-residents, which she compares to Michel de Certeau’s analyses of an ideal for the city in his essay *Walking in the City*. Under the subtitle *The Cosmopolitan Community: A Politics of Memory* she refers to the ex-residents as the ‘cosmopolitans’ and their experiences of the city as their ‘cosmopolitan lives’ (2001:239), yet she does not mention the ‘cosmopolitanism’ of District Six, which Bill Nasson (1990) and others described. The District Six Museum is mainly informative with regards to the experiences of the coloured ex-residents of District Six, and I believe that her journey across the map only relates the experiences of the coloureds whom she often quotes. Some research beyond the borders of the district would have contributed to her portrayal of the ‘cosmopolitanism’ of the area in a more meaningful way. The history of the area does after all also include the whites who moved out of District Six to the neighbouring suburbs like Gardens. Post-apartheid research documenting the forced removals and what these meant to the affluent citizens too, could have made a more critical contribution toward the articulation of coloured identity and its meaning for the history of the city.

McEachern’s paper quotes ex-residents as saying ‘You knew everybody in District Six; it was like one big family, we knew whites and blacks, everyone’ (2001: 234). Yet, no comments from whites are included. Also, such studies do not inform the reader, or coloured people, of the researcher’s own relation to the experience or discourse of coloured identity. It would in fact be more meaningful if authors (local and foreign) included their own experiences, thoughts and images in their research, i.e. if they made clear on what grounds they involved themselves in these matters.

Another example of an outsider introducing the familiar stereotypes into a District Six story came in a recent article by John Battersby entitled *Spirit of District Six refuses to die* (*The Sunday Independent*, 21 December 2003). In his description of the Kramer and Petersen show, *Fairyland*, Battersby refers to the performers and musicians as ‘unemployed former gang members’ from the district. There seems to be no evidence for this. During my research on the oral history of District Six and the *klopse* tradition I often visited one of the musicians, Billy Japhta, of the

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58 I had the privilege to talk to Billy Japhta and his family since the 1970’s. I recently worked with Linda Alexander where I had casual conversations about her musical and social experiences.
Fairyland show. Well known among the organisers of New Year Carnivals, Japhta owned a Malay choir and was a member of many Christmas choirs and klopse troops. Japhta was a musician who wanted to assist the youth in participating in the klopse carnivals and often gang members joined his choir. For many years before both he and his wife passed away, they shared their District Six experiences with me. I also had the privilege to work with another member of the Fairyland cast, Linda Alexander who, during a Welfare Awareness Project (October to November 2002) in Bonteheuwel, was training a drama group, Rootz. Not once during my many meetings and conversations with these members of Fairyland did they mention being ex-gang members. A good friend of Japhta’s, Ronald Fisher\textsuperscript{59}, told me: ‘Since I met him as a young man...I knew him as a banjo player...I never knew him as a gangster’ (Sauls 2004, Bonteheuwel).

Battersby also recalls that an emotional resident told him during the final years of the forced removals in 1978 and 1979, ‘You can take the people out of the heart of District Six, ou pellie, but you will never take District Six out of the heart of the people’. Yet this statement had been made by an ex-resident in 1966 and published in The Cape Times on the 8 March 1966 (Jeppie & Soudien, 1990: 123). This appears to be a case of a journalist using stereotypes and cliches to fill out his own story, instead of doing proper research, so perpetuating worn out representations of District Six.

Fields, among others, comments that a similar attitude can be found in academic research. ‘There has been a tendency amongst academic authors to erase the traces of feeling and emotion from the analysis of coloured identities’ (Fields, 2001: 97). Often, these ‘popular’ memories of working class communities are interpreted to suit an academic standard, a formal discourse, or a tourism guide and to become a financial commodity. The truth is that the dilemmas, ambiguities, and anxieties of belonging experienced by the coloureds, such as the political and cultural activist Narkadien, who appeared before the TRC hearings on human rights violations perpetrated in the South African prisons during the 1980s, have thus far not received much media and scholarly exposure.

\textsuperscript{59} Ronald Fisher is a retired ballroom, jazz and klops musician.
The art historian Carol Duncan (1995) and the anthropologist Ivan Karp (1991) both describe how the interpretation of heritage and art of other cultures in Western museums is often misrepresented for what are ultimately ideological purposes. Many oral narratives, cultural objectives and images are chosen to emphasize and assert a fraction of a history, or a particular angle of history, and often through this process other truths are deliberately or conveniently ignored. The issue of what the elitist museums and galleries impose on other cultures has become particularly significant within the present ‘reshaping’ or ‘changing’ of South Africa, as people attempt to define and redefine their cultural identities and as underprivileged cultures seek cultural recognition.

The closure of the controversial diorama of the Cape’s indigenous people at the South African Museum in 2000 provoked opposing opinions from various sectors of the country’s population. During the first Khoisan conference held at Oudtshoorn, delegates representing the first indigenous people of the country condemned the display, describing it as ‘vulgar’, asserting that it did not depict indigenous people as human beings (Tromp, 2001: 29). ‘The display presents hunters-gatherers in a pristine setting with the history of struggle and dispossession not shown’ (Davison, 2001: 29). For almost forty years the San diorama represented a crucial part of Cape Town, South African and African history. It depicted the first human inhabitants of the southern part of Africa, but ignored the early 19th century, when many of them were hunted and slaughtered by colonists.

Jack Lohman, at the time CEO of Iziko Museums of Cape Town and Ben Ngubane, the former Art, Science and Technology Minister, shared the views of Khoisan leaders, and added that the diorama represented and symbolised a time when South Africa’s indigenous people were regarded as sub-humans or animals. However, some members of the Bushmen community attending a meeting of the

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60 Grunebaum and Robins’ literature review explains how narratives of personal and subjective experience are displayed or silenced in the production of collective identities.

61 Collaboration projects, such as co-operative exhibitions and the research and introduction of new topics, process and representation, between the District Six Foundation and the Mayibuye Centre at UWC were facilitated to deal with the function and nature of museums in Cape Town.
San Cultural Heritage Committee held in Windhoek felt that it was important to expose their past. Skotnes, editor and curator of the exhibition entitled *Miscast, Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen* (1996), felt that the closure of the diorama represents yet another act of dispossessing the San of an opportunity of being part of the country's transformation.

The imagery of coloured identity, if he is not depicted as the *jolly hotnot* or *skollie*, often portrays him as the ‘subservient’ of the city. With present discourses on heritage studies, the subordinate groups are benevolently encouraged, with the assistance of the historically privileged group, to represent their ‘own’ culture within their ‘own’ panorama. However, this is often done with the minimal inclusion of the other cultural groups in South Africa. Like the Khoisan dioramas of the past, it deliberately evades the history of power and racial hierarchy by excluding the history of the city’s multiculturalism. For example photographic displays in institutions such as the District Six Museum and Centre for Popular Memory often represent portraits and activities of ‘discomfort’ lives of the coloureds and not the ‘comfort’ lives of the whites.

Erasmus uses the metaphor ‘unity in diversity’ to explain the depoliticising discourse of rainbow nationalism, which reads coloured identity (as all identities) ‘as “merely different”- simply another aspect of South African’s cultural “diversity”’ (Erasmus 2001: 20). It thus dilutes the coloured identity to the stereotypical characteristics mentioned above and does not accommodate a voice for debating relevant concerns of ‘them and us’ within the discourse of national history. As mentioned in a previous paper (Sauls 2001: 18), I do not view this form of representation (of identities) as being in the interest of reconciliation of a ‘fractured’ nation and a developing democracy.

The District Six Museum is one of the few heritage archives with significant involvement by a disenfranchised group in the Western Cape. In 1994 more than 200 volunteers (Moslem and Christian architects, artists, carpenters, seamstresses, etc.) offered their services to transform the Central Methodist Church into a museum. At present it is a repository for representations and cultural activities of

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62 Refer to Gerwel’s *Apartheid en die voorstelling van gekleurdes in die vroee Afrikaanse literatuur* (1987).
the last group remaining in the district, the Cape coloureds, most of whom now reside on the Cape Flats. The presentation of photographic family portraits within the museum does illustrate the sense of 'tolerance' that existed amongst coloured Christian and Moslem communities, but it also suggests a sense of 'tolerance' towards a racial hierarchy, which is still in existence. These portraits may be viewed as being similar to the representations of slaves and indigenous people as created by Europeans for foreign exposure. Some inhabitants of the Cape Flats tell that the museum accommodates 'the entertainment of the “toothless funny people” '(Erasmus, 2001: 20) of the district for the benefit of foreigners, thereby excluding representations of power and hierarchical structures that ruled peoples lives.

The representation of colouredness within its 'proper' landscape follows the same pattern as the ideology of a creation of a 'coloured nation', similar to that of the Kleurling Weerstand Beweging. If representation is limited to a single group in a museum, it does not allow a rational viewing of a culture that needs to develop in relation to a discourse of national identity (i.e. in conjunction and inter-relationship with other cultures). In 1998 the District Six Museum staged an exhibition of the eviction of the residents of Tramway Road in Sea Point. The exhibition contained the testimonials and photographic images of the ex-residents, the victims, but the oral histories and photographs of what was erected there afterwards, or who remained and who moved in, were not included. Bickford-Smith described the situation as follows 'Almost all of the rich and powerful, were white, or considered themselves white, but the poor included people of all colours' (Bickford-Smith, 2001: 16).

In 2000 the museum launched an exhibition63 Digging Deeper, which was based on the need for the people64 to explore their experiences and history of District Six in a more appropriate manner. Emphasis was placed on more oral history from the people to allow the exhibition to grow (Delport, 2001: 8). Since its launch three

63 'Exhibition' is a term that the curator, Peggy Delport felt was ‘misleading and applied simply for the lack of a better word to describe the range of processes culminating in the making of the aesthetic framework of the museum’ (Delport, 2001: 8).
64 The term ‘people’ is loosely used by the curator and does not specify if it includes people of all cultures, for example, the people of Cape Town; or only the coloured people of the Cape Flats.
years ago, however, I still do not see the ‘diggings’ getting to the level of the other cultures, which the histories are describing.

The lack of inclusive representations of diverse cultures within the museum gives a sense of a false ‘coloured purity’, which often romanticises its history, while disguising other ‘truths’ to suit the need of a public image. Inclusive representations of history may contribute to the healing of a fractured society and the reconciliation of a city once known for its cultural diversity and prosperity. A few citizens from the white population group of Cape Town have contributed to preserving the history of the district. The street signs donated by the white municipality’s supervisor at the time of the forced removals, who had been instructed to throw them in the sea, but who kept them instead, was a valuable contribution to the memory of the place. Controversial issues may lurk around the ‘ownership’ of these street signs, but when handing them back to those who had been evicted, he also told us part of his story.

Visual and theatre artists reflect the social, political, economical conditions and history of a time and place in many ways. They can and do impact on public perceptions of these conditions, and I will thus use the following examples to illustrate how this could either reinforce existing stereotypes or encourage more accurate representations. Playwright David Kramer and musical producer Taliep Petersen produced works for elite theatres in South Africa, Europe and the United States. Although these two are at present (in the opinion of both whites and middle class coloureds) regarded as the most ‘prominent’ script and songwriters of coloured history, they have not in fact formulated a critical reflection of coloured culture.

In the late 1980s the two collaborated on their first musical, *District Six: The Musical*, which saw the introduction of much local coloured talent, but the story stereotyped coloured inhabitants of District Six as *skollie* and *klops*. Nevertheless, *District Six: The Musical* reflected popular memories of District Six, of hawkers, gangsters and crooners as epitomised by the Sexy Boys® and their rendition of ‘*My Broertjie, My Bra*’ (Layne & Rassool, 2001: 147). The show became an

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65 The Sexy Boys are members of a gang of criminals who operate in the townships of the Cape Flats.
instant success amongst the elite theatregoers of the city. Annual shows such as Fairyland, Crooners, Poison and Kat and the Kings followed. Kat and the Kings, a story of a group of skollies with musical talent seeking fame, received international recognition in New York and London. In 1999 Kramer and Petersen received the Sir Laurence Olivier Award for the best new musical in London.

A critical analysis of these theatrical plays reveals how the district was stereotyped. Kat and the Kings portrays coloureds as gangsters, as uneducated, illiterate and lazy hooligans hanging out on street corners, who are irresponsible and worthless, yet have dreams of becoming famous. Poison portrayed the coloured youth or gangsters' addictions to drugs, while Fairyland described the history of District Six as being similar to a fairy tale, romanticizing the klops and the gangster through comedy, song and dance. 'District Six was not all music, song and dance' (Rive, 1990: 115). While Kat had to share his memories and expose himself to the wealthy audiences across the world, the white character in the production of Kat and the Kings, Mr Smithy, was cast as an invisible character, whose voice was occasionally heard exploiting the talented coloured skollies. The representation of culture through the politics of nostalgia, which romanticises loss and destruction, does not allow coloured identity to create its proper history or interact with other cultural identities in South Africa.

Ironically, a recent advert on SABC television called 'Alive with possibility, South Africa', which showed Nelson Mandela, President Thabo Mbeki, Desmond Tutu, Abdullah Ebrahim and other individuals commenting on the future of the new democracy, used David Kramer as a representative of the coloured group. While the Kramer/Petersen version of District Six gains fame and fortune, writers of the stature of Alex La Guma, Peter Abrahams, Achmat Dangor, Adam Small and Richard Rive have hardly received public attention as commentators on the

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66 Richard Rive said that while the 'The graffito at the entrance to this slum proclaimed: "You are now entering Fairyland" there was need to inform of the district's religion, discrimination, class practises; its intruding white slum landlords, pious social workers and arrogant policemen; its isolation against the outside world; its infested cockroach and rat-infested houses and slum clearance; and the community's banishment to the Cape Flats. 'Those are the facts. Now what about the fiction?'(1990: 112).

An article 'District Six-the razzle-dazzle-good-bad land', cited in Drum, read ' "You are now entering fairyland" say a scrawled sign on a wall at the entrance to District Six. Everyone who's been there knows just how true the sign is – but they're not the kind of fairies you read about in storybooks' (June 1963, pp 15-18).
history of coloured culture either in District Six or on the Cape Flats. Yet La Guma and Small’s\textsuperscript{67} brilliant works, such as \textit{A Walk in the Night} and \textit{Kanna Hy Ko Hystoe}, give exceptional insight into the struggle of a people’s commitment and vision for change in South Africa. \textit{A Walk in the Night} is a narrative of District Six’s community life and its slum condition, which La Guma experienced as a young politician long before the district was declared a whites-only zone. La Guma described the district as a spirited community, but also wrote about experiences of poverty and crime. Richard Rive, another District Sixer, added to this picture in his autobiography by saying that the district was a slum ‘where drunkenness, debauchery and police raids were the order of the day’ (1981: 4). La Guma’s story revealed the political struggle of a community that wanted to be part of the broader society of the city. Adhikari sums this up as follows:

\textit{A Walk in the Night} was written at a time when District Six had a notorious reputation as a crime-ridden slum and life in the area had not yet gained the aura of romanticism that surrounds it today. It was only later, from the late 1960s onwards, with the mass removal of over thirty thousand inhabitants under the Group Areas Act and the demolition of the houses they had occupied, that District Six became an international symbol of the brutality of apartheid. Writing a decade before the Group Areas removals, there is no question of La Guma romanticizing life in District Six nor of him succumbing to the ‘we were poor but happy then’ syndrome that afflicts so much of the more recent writing about the area. (2002: 222)

Small’s \textit{Kanna Hy Ko Hystoe}, a theatre piece about a gentleman’s return to apartheid South Africa after his mother’s death, described the struggle of the coloured people on the Cape Flats. Both works address the traumas of being poor within a crime-stricken township, where rapes and murders escalated daily, and give important insights into the coloureds’ struggle towards an identity and a recognition of their culture. They take place in the actual settings of social and political hardship, displacement and grievances, as well as the pleasures and wisdom of daily life, but cannot compete with the popularity of a romantic and highly selective version of history as depicted in comedy, song and dance, usually with a happy ending.

Visual artists whose work has dealt with the social and cultural activities of District Six and those of the apartheid era, include Peter Clarke, Lionel Davis and

\textsuperscript{67} La Guma’s and Small’s works were internationally recognised and Small’s literature was included as a setwork for white secondary schools during the apartheid era, yet coloured scholars and laymen, due to ‘gutter’ education, were seldom informed of these authors.
Sue Williamson. Davis, an artist, ex-political prisoner and resident of District Six, often refers to the racial complications that existed in the district in his anecdotes and images. His works refer to the common practice of ‘beautifying’ the coloured body to suit the Western concepts of physical beauty, such as sleek or blond hair, fair skin colour and slender body. For instance in Vanaand gat die poppe dans (undated) the composition takes the form of an invitation to the Bloemhof Crusaders Xmas Band's Grand Dance held at the Fidelity Hall in District Six. Images and text illustrating preparatory rituals, such as a woman ironing her clothes and a young man peering nervously at a bottle of peroxide in the barbershop while having his hair cut, shows what the body had to endure. ‘Stryk jou hare! Dye dit rooi! Maak jou mooi! Jy moet suffer vir beauty’ [Straighten your hair! Dye it red! Make yourself beautiful! You must suffer for beauty’] is the local patois showing a deft brand of biting wit (Maurice, 1995: 16). Powdering the face or colouring and straightening the hair were not only a feminine concept of beauty, but also a racial phenomenon of physical difference and appearance. Davis’s work also records the Eurocentric influences within cultural activities, such as the ‘ballroom’ dancing and music played in the district.

Another piece of Davis’, Home Sweet Home (undated), depicts an insider’s vision of the multicultural experience of the place. It represents imagery of the daily rituals, religious ceremonies and family portraits. The text inscribed in the print ‘Home to Xhosa, Zulu, Ovambo, English, Afrikaans’ tells of Davis’ experience of the diverse cultures of the place. Emile Maurice’s interpretation of this piece is the following:

Davis’ rejoinder then, alerts us to the outsider convention, which tags the area with specifically ‘coloured’ identity. The inscription is simply a clue which suggests that common perceptions are misguided, that the actors on the District Six stage were cosmopolitan, of numerous and diverse nationalities, and of all colours and creeds. But this is precisely the value of such work. They do not only offer a glimpse District Six’s social fabric, but are also sources for debate and points of departure for investigating, unravelling and reconstructing a people’s narrative of history, custom or other cultural code, racial and class attitude, identity, and so on – a kind of archaeological site for digging, if you will. (Maurice, 1995: 17)

Peter Clarke, an internationally acknowledged local artist and writer, often refers to District Six in his works. His works, such as Alex La Guma as a Young Man (1948), often refer to experiences such as attending art classes and visiting friends
in the district. Clarke’s personal comments and his visual images are often very humble and modest, but thought provoking. As a victim of forced removals, his works, such as the linocut *The hand is the tool of the soul*, are a combination of imagery and poetry which comments on the struggle and thus contributes towards the discourse of justice and humanity. Unlike artists such as Erik Laubscher, who painted images of the environment of District Six such as *Behind Hanover Street Façade* (1973), Clarke’s work represents the social activities of its residents. His work informs of his involvement with some of the residents who richly contributed to its history. Maurice explains that:

...it is a place of people who inhabit and thrive in user-friendly space, rather than an over determining landscape of decrepit buildings...as conscious participants who explore and mould life, as people who never leave the world unmarked precisely because they assert themselves as social protagonists. (1995: 19)

So too, the artist Gregoire Boonzaier stereotyped the district with imagery of the urban fabric of a working class community. Works such as *Table Bay from District Six, Cape Town* (1963), *Table mountain from District Six* (1962) and *Street with Tower, District Six, Cape Town* (1962), are descriptive of the objects, rather than the activities of the subjects. Also interesting is the manner in which author F P Scott translated some of Boonzaier’s titles: *Labourers’ Cottages, Constantia* is translated to *Volkshuisies, Constantia* (1962), while *Labourers’ Cottages and Palm Tree* is described as *Kleurlinghuistes en Palmboom* (1963). Both these works represent landscape settings – a perspective view of ‘lonely’ cottages without human presence - yet Scott interpreted these caricatures of homes as ‘volk’ and ‘kleurling’ identities respectively.

Sue Williamson, in her installation *The Last Supper* (1981), collected miscellaneous remains left behind on the bulldozed vacant land of District Six. These she embedded in resin blocks, which were displayed through holes in a black glass table. Images and anecdotes of the ex-residents formed part of the installation, which was exhibited in a Cape Town gallery. The piece speaks of what was left of a community that had been forced to move. As in the biblical *Last Supper*, the district was ‘crucified and buried’. Metaphorically, the work was strong, but it was also an opportunity for an outsider, albeit one sympathetic to the insiders, to ‘speak for’ a ‘voiceless’ people, understanding them from a safe
distance. Her work, *Mementoes of District Six* (1993), a house-like structure with objects in resin mouldings, was purchased by an American museum and exhibited in Europe. Unlike Davis’s and Clark’s works, which informs us of their experiences of the district, Williamson’s installations are in a more contemporary idiom, but are not informative of experiences of the place because of her position as an outsider.

In her response to the representation of black subjects, Patricia Davison feels that representing subjects does equate to ‘speaking for’. She concludes that critical engagement on this subject is necessary to shape and reshape identities in relation to changing social and political contingencies (Davison, 1999: 109). However Williamson’s imagery of an isolated community and anecdotes narrated by the coloured people of District Six, reveal her vision of the district as an isolated ‘coloured’ and not ‘multicultural’ community. It is interesting to see white people’s interpretation of forced removals and District Six, which often reflect it as a ‘coloured’ experience.

The sculptural project *The District Six Public Sculpture Project*, which was displayed on the site of the old District Six in 1997, not only led me to question the representation of race, but also, more importantly, the research and visual presentation used in the artworks. The majority of the artists came from the white population (both local and foreign), and depicted the popular coloured version of the history. Many whites might have had no experience of the district and its activities. There were very few representations of the history of the privileged residents of the neighbouring wards whose ancestors had once resided in District Six or who had been residents in the more affluent areas, condemning the district for its dishonesty, crime, immorality and poverty. These would have made the exhibition so much richer, more representative and more comprehensive.

Clarke, Williamson and other outsiders to District Six have applied their ideology to the representation of District Six in different ways. Clarke, because of his own experience of removal, has been able to enter the life of District Six, while one would expect Williamson’s work to reflect on more than just coloured experience. District Six suffered what so many other places did across the country, and by merely examining the nostalgia, loss or gaiety of coloured people, without locating
their experiences in relation to other cultures within the city, artists have contributed in different ways to the difficulty of coloured people in locating their position within the discourse of national identity.

An example of an art installation that dealt with history from a more direct position of experience, although not related to District Six, was Brett Murray's *Guilt and Innocence* work for the exhibition ‘Thirty Minutes’, which was held in the visiting booths of Robben Island in 1997. This installation was a personal testimony of the artist’s own experience during the apartheid era. Brett Murray presented photos of a boy in family shots who had been born in Pretoria during 1961, when South Africa became a Republic. The work consisted of framed photographs of moments in his life, between 1962 and 1990, such as fancy dress parties and childhood portraits, at a time when many who were fighting an unjust system were imprisoned on Robben Island. He described his identity by saying, ‘this was and is my comfortable and uncomfortable inheritance’ (Williamson, 1997: 9).

Murray’s installation allowed the viewer to experience the ‘untroubled’ lives of the privileged society during the country’s time of turmoil. Often I see photographs of political violence or freedom fighters, taken in the ‘townships’, and portraying the history of apartheid and wonder about other communities whose lives were not troubled by this violence. This is a representation, and an understanding, which many non-whites do not have. Murray’s installations inform us of a period, in the history of South Africa, of empowerment and disempowerment; comfort and discomfort; the insider’s and the outsider’s interpretations of a traumatic event in the history of a space, which for many South Africans was only an imaginable site, not necessarily noticed or accessible. He contributed to this fragmented history, viewing it from his own life experiences and position within it.

Jill Bennett, in her draft (2000) of a forthcoming book on trauma, *Material Encounter: Approaching the Trauma of Others Through the Visual Arts*, discussed the works of two artists whose work deal with loss and destruction. Both artists had worked with survivors of violence, and both were outsiders to the traumatic events. The first artist whose work she discussed was the Colombian Doris.
Salcedo, who travelled through her own country, seeking oral truths of the political violence. Even though Bennett described her as an outsider of the events, Louis Grachos, director/curator of SITE Sante Fe, informs us that ‘Salcedo has personally witnessed cycles of upheaval and disorder wrought on her country by paramilitary death squads, drug cartels, and terrorists’ (Salcedo, 1998: 7). As a Colombian who has witnessed the same trauma experienced by the victims, this might be her way of showing allegiance to the orphans and those who lost friends and family members. Salcedo’s art may be read as making a statement to the executioners. She is effectively not ‘speaking for’ her fellow Colombians, but ‘speaking with’ them when she makes these statements.

The other artist whose work Bennett uses to formulate her argument on approaches to trauma in visual arts is Gavin Younge. He travelled to Angola in 1997 to research the trauma of the war there. Bennett questioned the notion of whether a third party, who was not the primary witness, could ever represent the experience of another and concluded that they might be in an even stronger position to do so. In his account, on Bennett’s draft of his exhibit, Forces Favourites (1997)68, which formed part of a project Memorias, Intimicus, Marcas69, Younge felt that he was most probably, as a non-combatant, in a ‘better position to tell’ a story about the events of Operation Protea (1998) than someone who was there (Younge, 2001: 59). I partly agree with Bennett’s argument as I, for different reasons, have argued that narratives from both the inside and outside might contribute to healing from loss and destruction (Sauls, 2001: 18), but is the outsider necessarily in a better position to tell the story?

Bennett, in her argument, feels that even if the artist is not the primary witness he or she may still represent the victims of an event. She feels that if trauma can be expressed in terms of material traces rather than pain, then trauma should pose no problems for representation, although I would argue that this might also produce problems for representation. The artist need not be the ‘primary witness’, but I do

69 An interpretation of the history of the Angolan war by three artists, Younge, Alvim and Garaicoa, held at the Castle of Good Hope in 1997.
not agree that the artist can ever speak from the position of the victim, but rather addresses the trauma from his/her own perspective.

The title of Younge's work refers to a radio program 'Forces Favourites' which was broadcast on Springbok radio, and dedicated to the white South African troops conscripted into the South African Defence Force and patrolling the borders between South West Africa (Namibia) and Angola. Younge's work itself consists of ten post office bicycles, each carrying a television monitor broadcasting a video piece, arranged in an 'electronic laager' (Younge, 2001: 58). As a coloured male, I was never called up to do military duties. Younge's work elaborates on a part of South African history that was often spoken about, but not necessarily understood in the context of those who had experienced it, making this response to the Angolan war, from the artist's position, an important elaboration on this history.

During the apartheid era many in the Cape Flats did not participate in the struggle for liberation, but still experienced not having a political voice. Many whites managed to avoid conscription and still experienced their own trauma. Younge, as a South African, was in a position to contribute towards a part of history that had been silenced but, in Bennett's terms, does he necessarily do so from a better position than those who experienced the actual event?

South African contemporary artists whose works deal directly with their own social identity of being classified coloured are Bernie Searle, Robin Rhodes and Tracey Rose. Searle's artworks *A darker shade of light*, *Traces*, *Colour me* and *Not quite white*\(^7\) deal with her own identity. In her statement to the Juncture exhibition, held in Cape Town and London in 2001, she emphasised that she wanted to re-invent herself. She felt that her identity had been 'made' for her, and that representing herself as various mutable entities, was a way of resisting categorisation. In her *Colour me* photographic series she looks back at her viewer, which allows her to question the processing and framing of her identity (Smith, 2000: 13, Nolte 2001). She transforms her body into various shades by staining it with henna ink, flour and spices. In her video piece *Snow White* (2001), falling flour from above slowly covers her body. Through this performance, reference is made to her European and Arab heritages. She then claims her identity back by

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\(^7\) These installations were done in 2000 / 2001
wiping the flour off and making dough from the flour. This act of making food is an allusion to her maternal Mauritian and Arabian heritage (Van der Watt, 2003: 24-28).

Another Cape Town-born artist, residing in Berlin at the time of writing, Robin Rhode, has explored the need to preserve what belonged to him. His works have been impressions from his repressed childhood memories, which he uses to possess his own identity. ‘Some of his scenarios speak of trying to fit into standards and frameworks devised by others, situations devised for exclusions, set-ups for failure’ (Nolte, 2001).

Rhode is well known for his combination of drawings and performance, such as Bicycle, Leak, Getaway and Park Bench, in galleries and public spaces; they speak of the coloured community’s experiences of racial and social displacement. Other works exhibited in galleries, Coffee Cup (1998) and Pyp (1998) are metaphors of coloured identity. Pyp consisted of broken-off bottle-necks placed on their heads and displayed on a small shelf. These objects are used for smoking marijuana and other substances such as mandrax tablets, or as weapons. Such bottle-necks are often related to gangsterism and stereotypically associated with coloured identity. Coffee Cup, a video piece, speaks of the displacement of the coloured community. Coffees are requested as either black or white, i.e. with or without milk, but coffee with milk is also brown a mix of white and black. In apartheid’s racial classification coloured identity was always somewhere between black and white (Hobbs, 2001: 8-25).

A young artist, Tracey Rose, who has a combined Khoisan and European ancestry often makes reference to her own social history within her work. Much of her imagery comments on her body, identity and gender as a ‘non-white’ person in South Africa. For an installation on ‘Graft’, a show curated by Colin Richards for the 2nd Johannesburg Biennale, Rose presented Span I and Span II. Sitting inside a glass cabinet, a bald-headed Rose displayed herself seated nude on a sideways TV, knotting strands of her own hair with the detail displayed as a close up on the monitor. At the same time, an actual coloured prisoner carved on a wall a text of

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71 These works were all performed in 2000.
72 Pyp is the Afrikaans word for pipe.
hers in Afrikaans referring to *gladde* (straight) hair\textsuperscript{73}. Through her naked body on the TV monitor, she wanted to negate the passivity of the reclining nude. She felt that it was important for her to confront what she was not supposed to do with her body. The knotting of her hair not only evoked the rosary beads of her Catholic childhood, but also working with one’s hands, and the meaning of handiwork as a form of empowerment. Her work has often dealt with childhood memories around the role of hair and how it defined race (Bedford, 2001: 14-17). Coloureds are often stereotyped as having stiff or curly, which, during one’s childhood or teenage years can be experienced as a ‘disgrace’, and associated with an inferiority.

These coloured artists are producers of their personal experiences within a particular culture. The representations of their own identities and bodies are, in a sense, references to the many ‘hidden agendas’ and unspoken aspects of coloured experience such as derogatory comments focussing on the physical appearances of skin, hair and noses, which are often avoided due to political constraints of ‘correctness’. Through their work, they have indicated the importance of the representation of the coloured body and identity.

Today’s transformation period symbolises a period in history when all cultures and societies should be included in a debate where our past can be reshaped. All binaries - affluent/poor, urban/rural, black/white, privileged/disadvantaged, educated/self-taught - will need to be refigured in new narratives. In configuring the history of our city and our country, whites need to contribute to it in a subdued or subaltern manner. This will have to be in the form of sharing oral histories, publication, representation and negotiation. ‘This means we have to do things differently and develop new practices, perception and mindsets’ (Odendaal, 1996: 13).

Hilton Judin’s installation *Setting Apart*, held at the William Fehr Collection in the Castle of Good Hope during 1995, was described as being different in style, giving bleaker witness, with a less benign trust in renewal and mediation than that of the representation of the District Six Museum (De Kok, 1998: 66). Even though the

\textsuperscript{73} This coloured artist has straight hair.
work was about the documentation of apartheid laws, which enforced segregation and forced removals, it in a sense gave just as much meaning to the socio-political environment as that of the city's 'slums and affluent inhabitants'.

The installation consisted of 'arbitrary' documents such as maps, plans and archival documents, which hung in the form of minutes, memos, letters and legal orders between eleven glass display panels, and investigated spatial topography by interrogating the language of apartheid. The sound effects in the installation came from a video where elderly black people spoke of forced removals and their impact on social conditions, the individual and community life (De Kok, 1998: 67).

Judin's exhibit was a play between languages and space, which informed the viewer of the body (expressions of hate, sadness, loss, trauma etc.) and that of the subject of domination by those who had enforced the segregation laws. The role of Judin was that of a citizen, an interpreter and an 'outsider' to the event. As an architect he used the official space of the oldest building in South Africa (the Castle) and the official apartheid language (Afrikaans) to narrate a part of the city's history. This history was daily communicated and known to many Capetonians without having physical documentation. His narrative spoke in the voice of the official, claiming title to it by power and office in the name of culture, class and race (Soudien & Metler, 1995: 8).

The spatial ordering of the city, the manipulation of the living environments, the public outcomes in the fulfilment of policy, all were represented by data alone: the actual written communications that determined lives and deaths. The documents testify to the way the segregation of space determined not only the unequal distribution of land and resources, but the development of a hermetic set of narratives and a rigidly closed civic language in South Africa. (De Kok, 1998: 68)

*Setting Apart* not only contributed to the fragmented history of District Six, but also to that of its neighbouring suburbs as the city experienced the segregation laws during the apartheid era. The discovery of the hidden 'ciphers' and mechanism of the apartheid regime gave insight or meaning to questions on forced removals, official race classifications and spatial intentions.
In my view De Kok’s comparison of Judin’s installation with that of the representation of District Six is crucial in acknowledging the broader context within which these events took place, and the associated complexities of renewal and mediation. The District Six Museum, the ‘Images and Representation’ exhibition and the ‘District Six Public Sculpture Project’ could easily have been used to question the history of those who were privileged to move to the more affluent areas of the city bowl as well. The history of forced removals was not only about the displacement of communities from a particular space, but also about the occupation of the other spaces such as Kirstenbosch, Newlands and Harfield village, where there was no destruction and communal life continued undisturbed.

Judin’s exhibition raised important concerns, such as why white people occupied the renovated homes of coloured people who had been evicted.

In 1880s and 1890s many powerful whites came to believe that segregation was a good idea. There were some whites who spoke out against racism, but by 1901 many were urging that, as in the southern United States, blacks - coloureds as well as Africans - in Cape Town should be barred from trams, cabs and even sidewalks. (Bickford-Smith, 2001: 16)

Answers such as the above do exist (whether true or false) to these questions, just as there are answers to why people were evicted. I raise this issue because few have questioned, represented or published research that questions and documents the conditions of the historically empowered. The same questions normally asked in interviews with ex-residents displaced by forced removals, could also be asked of those who moved into the home of an evicted family.

Memory can be very slippery and there will always be stumbling blocks, loopholes and lapses, which are further affected by trauma, denial and forgetting, especially among those who wish to rationalise the situation. To represent, debate and negotiate the history of the city of Cape Town, its multicultural society will have to deal with its paradoxes and complexes. Our perception thereof is important as we venture into the future.
Chapter 3: PRACTICAL WORK:

WIE IS MAG=GAM IS WIE

The tableaux were created through a process that developed from working with my own experiences, observation and imagination on an assembled selection of historical literature, oral documentation, and family and public photographic images. Technically I was working with particular construction and printing processes that had developed over several years, and that I continued to explore as I involved myself with the content that emerged in my personal and historical research. The whole body of work developed as I collected and assembled found objects for the tableaux on the basis of how they coincided with my growing perception of the subject matter.

This process of accumulating and experimenting with objects within the creation of a tableau or installation offers an opportunity for an observational and spatial encounter between the creator and the creation. The development of a three dimensional space invites the creator into the created zone, which sets the preferences for dialogue. The space and the objects interact and set the ‘stage’ for the ‘body’ to experience the created atmosphere or mood. The dialogue between the creator and the creation sets in motion ‘creativity’, and this authorises interpretation and development. In this way I was aware of a layered process in which objects and their possible meanings interacted with my own images and memories and concepts.

The film clips acted as source material that assisted in providing the ‘motion’ imagery that two-dimensional prints and three-dimensional sculptural imagery could not offer for the creation of an identity transformation. Video imagery consists of visual effects, which are enjoyed more within the material world and more easily allow a journey within a ‘strange’ or ‘unknown’ environment. Unlike the tableaux and the installation pieces, the video medium attracts attention through movement, sound and presence.

In these works I explore notions of Cape coloured identity by focusing on particular aspects of stereotyping, as well as the impact of discrimination
historically and in current experience that are significant for me. The symbolic objects, such as hair, leather, klopse garments and scientific instruments were chosen because of their role in historical descriptions of coloured identity. My choices of symbolic objects depended on the ways in which these were perceived by their creators, by the general public and by myself. I was trying to construct a dialogue between different meanings attached to the objects as well as particular qualities and affects they evoke, such as a sense of power, fear and loss, which often revealed aspects of my personal emotions and artistic interests. Overall the choices of symbolic objects within the work are aimed at allowing the imagery to articulate important ways in which coloured identity has been stereotyped.

In the making of the individual tableaux, visual elements such as form, perspective, texture and space, were structured to convey narrative and psychological content, while formal characteristics of the images were influenced by sources such as oral history, newspaper clippings, photographs and my own experiences. During construction of the individual tableaux an order emerged that allowed the images to work both as single units, and as a body of works dealing with a single subject. For example, the klopse images express a time in the city’s history of segregation that also forms part of the narrative of the other tableaux, such as the corner piece of a room that comments on the spaces involved in the creation of apartheid laws. As a single unit the klopse images also convey messages on the stereotyping of coloureds at present.

Emphasis is placed on different scales in the works and on how space and distance influence and evoke emotions in the viewer. The creation of space within the tableaux became an important aspect of the work, as well as the creation of a particular sense of time and atmosphere in the exhibition area as a whole. This strategy that I employ in my work Thembinkosi Goniwe refers to as ‘my work bringing another world and reality inside the exhibition zone’ (Goniwe, 1999: 22). This strategy allows the viewer to enter the ‘imaginative’ space, so as to evoke and transform emotions, in this case emotions such as nostalgia or residual feelings relating to the traumas of oppression and misrecognition.

The construction of the tableaux and the positioning of the objects in the chosen sections of the space are intended to guide the viewer’s movement within the
exhibition space, so as to stimulate memory and imaginative vision. From the beginning of this project, I visualised exhibiting these works within a space that related to my memory and experience of District Six. The fact that the St Phillips Primary School survived the ‘bulldozing’ of the district, gave me an opportunity to exhibit the work in an historic building full of its own layers of history. As I am an ex-pupil of the school the use of this space carries a personal meaning to the narrative.

Although the tableaux stand as individual pieces, within the exhibition space the works constitute a single body that questions the ‘fractured’ discourse of coloured identity. Layers of collective and personal memory, of kinds of signs and types of representation are brought together in different ways to constitute a ‘transforming’ zone that engages the viewer in a dialogue. The aim is to evoke memories and hidden or lost fragments of experience that might lead the viewer to pose questions about his or her own identity and relation to colouredness and to the experience of racial classification and the power relations associated with this.

The video pieces and the ‘private’ arena of skollie and klopse traditions add other dimensions to the exhibition area, offering the viewer experiences outside the daily realm to provoke wider and deeper responses and associations.

My first video piece, called Cry, the loved district was produced with the help of an ex-resident of District Six, whose father had recorded his family’s activities in the early 1960s. The footage was taken from 8mm film, which I edited and produced as a video. The video piece is divided into three parts to narrate the experiences of the district, the central city and the surrounding suburbs respectively. The first part contains the recordings of the author and his family’s social life in District Six, while the second part informs of the district’s street carnivals. The final part is about the family’s outings to places in the city suburbs, such as the beach at Oudekraal and the Rhodes Memorial.

The second video piece, The good, the bad and the coloured contained the skollie ritual of tattooing and the face painting of the klopse tradition. Two members of the coloured community from the Cape Flats did the performance and the video was recorded with a domestic digital camera. The performers are indeed members
of the *klopse* tradition and they know the ‘art’ of *skollie* tattooing. Sound was deliberately left out of both video pieces to represent the symbolic meaning of being ‘voiceless’.

The particular combination of building materials (Cretestone, wood, metal) that reference building sites and street grids, found objects (hair, bullets, musical instruments) that reference symbolic elements, and the *klopse* garments are intended to suggest contexts of lived experience that relate to the stereotyping of identity. In our present democracy coloureds participating in city street parades are viewed as ‘coons’, which suggests ‘thievish’ characters. Used in combination, these source materials enabled me to construct tableaux I hope could arouse the viewer’s emotions and stimulate his/her psyche so as to see beyond stereotypes and become aware of layers of history and experience behind the masks.

The tableaux or installation pieces foreground the absence of actual bodies, to reference both the absence of coloured bodies in the making of racial laws, as well as the absence of real experience in the stereotyping. In the video pieces, the body is visible, but remains voiceless - a metaphor for past experience and a present position within the current transitional phase of this democracy.

The tableaux present fragments of space, showing the corner of a room, a science trolley, a bookshelf, to focus an emphasis on the symbolic meaning of the found objects. Such isolation or ‘cropping’ forces the viewer to gaze directly at the objects, which creates more intimacy and focuses the viewer’s attention on the reciprocal engagement of the objects with both myself, as the creator, and the viewer as the target of my engagement with these issues and objects.

The printing on different surfaces, such as Cretestone, wood and ceramic tiles is mainly monochromatic, printed in black, or with black as the first print, but later reworked with grey ink or sanded down. This was consciously done to give the images an atmosphere or mood of fragmentation, loss and nostalgia. Earth colours such as brown and green were used to print the series of portraits to evoke the sense that they had been ‘discovered’ or ‘excavated’. The colourful *klopse*

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74 Cretestone is the trade name for a calcium sulphate hemi-hydrate plaster used by builders to skim interior walls.
garments were used to illustrate a carnival tradition and the transformation of the coloured body from *klops* to *skollie*. These colourful outfits are original garments worn by members of the various troops in the ‘townships’ of the Cape Flats, many of whom are ex-residents of District Six as well.

In summary I could say that my experience as a coloured person gave me a specific and urgent self-consciousness of a particular coloured community’s *dilemmas*, which guided me to produce a body of work that questions the representation of their identity. I wanted to exhibit the whole body of work in such a way as to manifest the identity crisis within a historical discourse, inviting viewers to participate in dialogues both with the historical layering of coloured experience and with other participants.
Chapter 4: CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I have unpacked a series of contexts in which notions of coloured identity have developed as well as examined critical responses to that identity. District Six has been for both personal and wider political and artistic concerns, as it features as the site of representations of coloured identity both during apartheid and since 1994. In my discussion I have thus problematised the representation of coloured identity, which is at present in fact misrepresented within the realm of the country’s historical discourse. I have thus been led to question some of the ways that artists have represented coloured people and their experiences, and looked for models for how, as an artist I may be able to ‘speak with’ the history of District Six and its inhabitants.

My own art works have attempted to examine notions of identity through imagery, which began with the assemblage of found objects and text. Observation, dialogue and experience made me realise that my formulation of such a sensitive theme could be interpreted as ‘speaking for’ the previously ‘voiceless’ communities, thus my intention here was merely to ‘speak with’ those who contest misrepresentation, as well as making ‘others’ aware of such misrepresentation.

In illustration of such ideas I have created a body of work which locates itself within various traditions such as memorabilia, construction and imagination. I have examined and identified history as being fragmented and controlled. My tableaux work within a visual framework of fragmentation to inform of division and authority. My tableaux, prints and digital imagery derived from a collective concern of, as well as a personal view, of the dilemmas and contestation of the coloured identity within the Western Cape.
Chapter 5: CATALOGUE

The methods that I used for printing on the various surfaces, such as on Cretestone, leather, ceramic tiles and fabric, were very experimental. It was a type of monographic print, which suited the needs of the individual pieces. It also provided a quality print that would relate to the subject of memory, which is vital to the surface and appearance of the object.

One of the monographic printing methods I could have used was to transfer photocopied imagery, with the use of solvents, directly to a surface as a completed print. The other method would have been to transfer the photocopied image to a lithographic block to be chemically processed and printed. This process would have allowed the image to be printed in another colour. Both of these printing methods were however unsuitable for the work surfaces that I had created, firstly as they were rough and uneven, and secondly because the works are on a fairly large scale.

During my undergraduate studies I experimented with a technical method of printing from a photocopy. I extended this form of lithographic/photocopy printing to thick, large rough and uneven surfaces.

The primary surface that I printed on was Cretestone panels. Cretestone forms an important part of my work, as it is associated with construction. These surfaces do take a while to dry though, and this provided time for them to be manipulated and reworked. For the printing ink to adhere to the surface the exposed layer of the Cretestone needed to be completely dry.

Leather, cloth and paper book covers were also used to reproduce an imaginary bookshelf. The spine of each selected book cover was used to reprint a fictitious title. These covers had various sizes, colours and thickness. Leather pieces were used to represent skin, and tattooed texts and images were printed onto these surfaces. The wooden surfaces were mainly carved or cut into, similar to a block produced for a woodcut print.
The tableaux

Title:
Wie is jou Maker (Who is your Maker)

2001
Mixed media construction
122x122x220 cm

Description:
Two constructed Cretestone panels with a wooden floor were assembled to form a three-dimensional space. Fractured found ‘office’ furniture was embedded into the walls and floor of the created space. Text and images were printed on the Cretestone surfaces with a litho/photocopy and stencilling method. The found ‘office’ equipment was placed on the wooden desk.
Wie is t jou Maker (Who is your Maker)

Details
Title:
*al helpit 'tie troossit darem (even if it does not help it will console)*

2001
Mixed media construction
90x96x100 cm

Description:
The skeleton of a found wooden armchair was embedded into a constructed Cretestone block. Text was carved into the panels of the chair with wood-cutting tools. Photocopy prints were transferred onto the transparent fabric, which was used to cover the frame of the chair. The fabric itself was stitched to the Cretestone surface.
Title:

_Ek maak ma'net gelykkenis (I am only making a comparison)_

2001

Mixed media construction

140x150x290 cm

Description:

Assembling found objects, such as the box brownie camera, metal pieces and fabric that were embedded into Cretestone blocks, which would refer to photographic and scientific tools, created the image as a whole.
Ek maak ma’net gelykkenis (I am only making a comparison)

Detail
Title:
*Tjou stertjie was afgekap I (Your tail was chopped off)*

2002
Mix media construction
86x125x154 cm

Description:
A welded metal laboratory trolley embedded into a Cretestone wall was constructed, filled with scientific laboratory equipment and other found objects. The Cretestone surfaces and the ceramic tiles were hand-printed with litho/photocopy images and text. Found objects were embedded into the Cretestone floor.
Tjou stertjie was afgekap I (Your tail was chopped off)
Details
Title:
*Tjou stertjie was afgekap II*

2002
Mixed media construction
130x180x180 cm

Description:
Old furniture such as the frames of a table and chair were assembled to form a constructed Cretestone wall. The tiled floor was created with hessian bags, hair and arbitrary objects. The fabric and the Cretestone surface were printed with the litho/photocopy technique.
Tjou stertjie was afgekap II
Detail
Title:
Fluit, fluit my storie's uit (The end of the story)

2002
Mixed media construction
34x220x245 cm

Description:
Titles of found book covers were removed and created imaginary titles were printed onto them with the litho/photocopy technique. This printing was done on an etching press. The Cretestone surfaces were litho/photocopy hand printed with text and embedded with objects. The texts on the leather surfaces were lithographic prints. The fragments of the book covers were embedded into a found wooden frame, which resembled a bookshelf, and this was assembled to form the constructed Cretestone walls.
Fluit, fluit my storie’s uit (The end of the story)

Details
The Worthies, Wickham, and fixing for. They want and time to destroy you. Well planning well in their present plan, growing trouble everywhere. I f this disaster will strike the warning, and they will be fatally hit. There are seven things they hate and cannot tolerate.

A proud look.

A high tongue.

 blind this still innocently people who rises up and:

...
Title:

*Gie my Krag (Give me Strength)*

2003
Mixed media installation
Size:

Description:
The litho/photocopy print method was used for both the front and side Cretestone panels and the rear wooden panels. The inside of the structure was covered with photocopies that were reworked with bitumen, glue and turpentine. The leather pieces were printed with both the plate lithographic and litho/photocopy methods. Found natural and fake hair was used as part of the garments.
Gie my Krag (Give me Strength)
Details
Title:
...blan kes mo ettie in nie w a ter mossie, die kleurlinge moet it drink...( ...w hites should not mess in water that coloureds must still consume of...)

2003
Mixed media installation
Size:

Description:
Found klo pse garments were used to construct the individual images. These were constructed with wooden panels, cardboard, fabric, glue, screws and acrylic paint. Each base was reworked with newspaper clippings, bitumen, glue, Cretestone and wax. The instruments were manipulated with found objects such as bottles, playing cards and chains.
...blanes moettie inne water mossie, die kleurlinge moet it drink...(...whites should not mess in water that coloureds must still consume of...)

Details
Title:

'Os is mos amal mens' (We are all human)

2004
Litho/photocopy prints

Description:
The portraits were printed on Fabriano printing paper with various colour inks.
The Video pieces

Title: ‘The good, the bad and the coloured’

The performance was done within the backyard of a home in the Cape Flats. A young student from the same community did the camera work. A Sony digital handycam was used for the filming and an iMac Movie1 program was used for the editing.
Title:

'Cry, the beloved district'

The clippings for this documentary of District Six, the city bowl and surrounding suburbs were taken from 'old' found 8mm films. These short films were captured on a video camera, which were then transferred to the iMac Movie! program and edited to form three short video pieces.
Selected Bibliography:


James, W., Caliguire, D., Cullinan, K. 1996. *Now That We are Free: Coloured Communities in a Democratic South Africa*. Cape Town: IDASA.


Appendix

My youth years has been complicated by the struggles of the injustice system created by apartheid, but this in the same time allowed me to question and inquire of my past and identity. Since then I have experienced having personal conversations and this has been mainly memorised. During my undergraduate studies, which started in 1994, I started recording some of the conversations in writings and since 2000, I cassette recorded some of my interviews. An average amount of my interviews were done during the celebrations of the klopse carnivals held on the 2 January 2001-2003. Interviewees often requested to remain anonymous. These conversations have been edited for the purpose of this paper. I will include a list of the appropriate interviews I worked with during this paper.

Abrahams, E. 1960 - Recordings of family's social activities in District Six, the city bowl and other surrounding sites (8mm camera).


'Sheila’ 2001. Personal conversations held during March to May. UCT, Rondebosch.
